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THE MAN OF THE FUTURE.

THE

MAN OF THE FUTURE.

AN INVESTIGATION OF

THE LAWS WHICH DETERMINE HAPPINESS.

By ALEXANDER CALDER.

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PREFACE.

This little work is the offspring of two severe trials in my life, which it would be wrong to leave unmentioned. The one was of a physical, the other of a spiritual nature. The first occurred when I was about the age of twenty-four. I was then at Canton, in China. It was part of my duty to weigh teas intended for the English market; and while so employed I was exposed to the bitter north winds in the Chinese Hongs. I took severe cold, which finally assumed the form of rheumatism. The attack lasted for about thirteen months, and for many of those months I was attended by two of the doctors of the East India Company's service; excellent men, but who, nevertheless, failed to do me any good. I adhered strictly to their advice, and carefully noted its results, but without benefit to myself: in fact, I was on the brink of succumbing to my malady, when I resolved to abandon doctors and resort to my own devices, based on personal observation and experience. Though bent down

with pain, and stiff at nearly every joint, I felt that, considering my youth, while there was life there was the germ of health and strength. Medicines I had learned were, at all events in my case, of no avail. I determined to turn my attention to a mode of treatment which seemed natural and intuitive—the method which I shall hereafter describe. I observed it with strict fidelity, and had the satisfaction to be rewarded, before the lapse of many months, with a complete restoration to health. This method I have since recommended to others indisposed in various ways, and wherever it has been fairly tried, it has proved successful.

My second great trial was, as I have said, of a spiritual nature. Naturally of a serious disposition, I had learned by experience the importance of individual attention to the affairs of the soul, as well as to the health of the body.

Many years had elapsed. I was in England. The dissensions among the clergy of rival creeds; the abandonment by the most liberal of them of such doctrines as scriptural inspiration, eternal punishment, predestination, and election by grace, &c., aroused me to examine into the grounds of my spiritual belief and condition. The result arrived at in my mind was one of extreme doubt. The self-reliance which sustained me

in my first trial came to my aid now, when I most sorely needed it. But it was not a presumptuous self-reliance. I prayed earnestly and daily for knowledge and true enlightenment, which, perhaps, has been vouchsafed. In the midst of my deep bewilderment, I was, at any rate, suddenly struck with the thought that, as there were principles of health which, if cultivated, ensured health, in like manner there were principles of morals which, if cultivated, produced goodness and virtue. From that moment I beheld light.

How had I succeeded where medicine had failed? By pursuing a method which existed before medicine was ever thought of. How, in like manner, did I solve doubts which the Church was unable to solve for me? By adopting rules of truth which existed ages before Christianity, or any other form of religion, had appeared. I had simply in both cases put myself, so to speak, in harmony with the designs of the great Author of all—and I say this with all reverence, but with confidence. I have now for years ceased to live under the dominion of either power—Medicine or the Church, and am all the better for it. I have broken loose from a thraldom which binds every man who puts faith in dogmas, and I now experience real liberty and strength. I possess a new life, and with it increased health, vigour, and

intelligence. My way through the world, which was formerly full of doubt and darkness, is now plain and intelligible. The so-called cares of life are no longer felt as a burden. They are easily and cheerfully borne. Work has become a pastime and a pleasure; while affliction is met with meekness. I understand the present, and begin to comprehend the future. My health is sound and good. Calamities fall lightly upon me. I am not easily disappointed or terrified: and death, whenever it approaches, will, I hope, be welcome.

Whence is all this? Simply from the fact that while much formerly was artificial, now everything is natural. Formerly I followed the devices of men; now I strive to obey the laws of the Maker of men. If you will do the same, I predict you will be happy. This "vale of tears" will no longer be the desert which some professors make it; but rather will it be found a garden of flowers, through which you will recognise yourself as being led by the hand of the great Creator; walking with Him in spirit, as from step to step you discern the development of His work.

Everything about us proclaims His laws. It is for us to learn to read and understand them. If we conform to these laws we become happy: if we oppose them, we render ourselves more or less miserable, ac-

cording to the greater or less extent in which we do them violence. Studying them, we are led into truthful and pleasant ways; neglecting them, we are sure to fall into error and to injure ourselves.

The aim of this little work is to make mankind happier. It points out certain rules of a positive character; and which I consider infallible, based as they are upon everlasting truth. I make no pretension to fine writing; the means employed, the language used, shall be plain and homely, so as to be understood by all. My object is to communicate, in the plainest manner, ideas which in me have produced great good. I think them invaluable; I am profoundly penetrated by them, and I submit them to others in all confidence.

We should endeavour to make our happiness rest on first principles; rules which in all parts of the earth have their application and force—measures in which all nations and races agree as soon as they understand them. We should apply to the fountain head of all truth; setting aside all those artificial laws which the ingenuity of man has substituted for its outpourings, wherever these devices are found, whether they are the utterance of prophets, of priests, or of teachers.

Are not these teachers, these doctors and priests, beginning to acknowledge this themselves? Do not

the most intelligent and thoughtful among them cease to put faith in drugs and in dogmas? When our guides are at fault, and quarrelling amongst themselves, it is high time for us to see whither we are being led. It is high time for right-thinking men to band together, and dispassionately examine matters, as well for themselves, as for humanity in general.

The claim of churches, sects, and schools to supervise the elevation and well-being of mankind, however well founded on authority and tradition, and however well meant, is insufficient to meet the necessities and wants of the times. The most thoughtful minds of the period acknowledge this. The clergy are not ignorant of it. Christianity, as now taught, while it is losing power over the minds of the intellectual, also fails to reach the masses of the people. There is nothing surprising in all this: men are wiser than they were. Their judgment is better. They can discriminate between principles real and everlasting, and those which are false and transitory. I do not shrink at the thought of being accused of free-thinking on such great matters. I claim to follow the example of Jesus called the Christ, who, when he appeared amongst men, raised an outcry against the orthodox teachers amongst the Jews of his day. I affirm more—that some of the chief of my views have the support of the testimony of the real

Christ; not the Christ as variously taught in Christendom; not the Christ of the creeds, but the Christ of the Gospels. The beauty and sublimity of Christ's work and character should be understood in its simplicity, and not confounded with the superstition and mystery which surround it. The sermons of Christ are rich in profound philosophy. Unhappily his followers have engrafted on that philosophy, so full of excellent truth, the most grotesque inventions of their own, with which the spirit of Christ could have had no sympathy.

My design is, as I have said, to induce the reader to study to acquire happiness, by relying on our Maker's laws. I do not pretend to a perfect degree of knowledge of these laws—far from it; but I believe I know enough of them to point out the true path to any honest wayfarer on the journey of life. No apology needs be offered for the attempt I make. The clergy admit that all their efforts do not reach the minds of the masses of the people; and they make the most earnest appeals to laymen for help. The present is the only form in which I can aid them; and in this effort I hope to obtain the sympathy of all the intelligent classes. It is almost needless to say that I sincerely believe in all that I here advance, based as it is upon my own personal experience.

With all deference to others, it appears to me that I may surely be permitted to interpret the designs of our Maker in such a manner as I think proper without being subject to odium. I am the responsible party in respect to my present and future welfare. The life I lead now and the existence I shall have hereafter, will depend entirely upon the use I make of the means I have of judging of our Maker's design, and of doing His will. No other person in the world can answer, or stand surety for me, in the great liability I incur as a rational being towards my Maker. On me he has bestowed independent powers of observation. What if I see my way plain to effect my perfectibility, in a way different to anything which I have read in books, must I surrender my judgment and make myself a slave to the judgment and opinions of others? Are their eyes and minds to do service for me? If navigators trusted entirely to the charts which were made hundreds of years ago, there would be shipwrecks without number. In like manner it is idle to rest wholly on the experience of past men, no matter how able and gifted they were.

And if it seems to me that I have discovered a better, surer, safer road to travel on than any I knew before; if the experience of years assures me that I am not trusting to a delusion, but to what is real and

substantial; if I have the power of looking back upon myself and examining whether physically, mentally, and morally I have degenerated or improved; and if I arise from this examination in the fullest confidence that I have gained immensely in all these respects, why should I be deterred from communicating the knowledge I have gained to others? Am I not rather bound to do so?

It is, I confess, unsatisfactory, dangerous, and even cruel, to discuss, in an off-hand manner, subjects bearing on religion. You strike perchance at an item of belief which is the whole foundation of someone's faith. You perhaps succeed in demolishing it, just as an iconoclast may destroy at a blow the figure of a saint long venerated and trusted: and what is left to the poor devotee? The shrine he worshipped at is a blank: the source whence he once drew comfort, such as it was, is dried up, and perhaps nothing comes to supply its place. Were it not, therefore, that I have had most remarkable personal experience, I should not venture to attack the systems now in force. But when I see so much misery in the world under different forms; when I encounter so many shipwrecks of the brightest hopes, I can no longer keep silence.

It is possible that by some these pages will be said

to teach atheism. To these I reply: Are you real lovers of our Maker and of His truth? If so, you will rejoice to hear that I wish to intensify your love, and to deepen your knowledge of truth, by removing the mists which surround and separate Him from you.

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PART I.

ANALYTIC.

THE MAN OF THE FUTURE.

CHAPTER I.

THE GOAL OF LIFE.

THE happiness of mankind is a subject which occupies the serious attention of many. The good in all nations try to effect the welfare of their fellow-creatures. Statesmen, politicians, churches, societies of various denominations, all make laudable efforts to improve and benefit the human race, but happiness, in a general sense, seems as distant as ever. May not this be owing to false methods in our pursuit of the really good and true? Is it not possible that instead of adopting that simplicity which the great Author of all things intended us to follow, we have relied too much on artificial methods which have little affinity to His will? We require some more sure way before us —some firmer ground to stand upon. I have long been profoundly penetrated with these facts, and shall endeavour, in the course of this work, to state my views

on this very important subject as briefly as I am able, classifying the pursuit of happiness under the two following heads :—

I. Health of the body.
II. Health of the mind.

If we possess these two essentials, all other things will be found comparatively unimportant. If we are without bodily and mental well-being, we cannot be said to have secured real solid happiness.

It is not to be doubted that a being so perfect as our Maker, has formed a design of His own in respect to us. He must have made rules for the well-being of mankind as well as for that of all His other creatures. It is all-important, then, for us to ascertain what these rules are: to study them when discovered, and to carry them out in their purity. The only way in which a Being eminently spiritual can communicate with creatures like ourselves, is spiritually. He reveals His will to us through our reason. To neglect to understand His will is to fail in the first of duties, and carries with it heavy penalties; while to understand and follow it bears a multitude of benefits—a fact which requires very little proof beyond the experience of every person of observation.

Human happiness being the goal of life, it can only be revealed by a knowledge of the road. The way to the end must be understood before that end can be reached. There is something to be learned and studied—something to be done; an art which has rules. Putting these rules into operation, we obtain the desired effect.

Let us examine the object of our solicitude. Man is of a mixed nature; body, mind, and spirit, each of them properly developed, complete his happiness. The bodily nature of man is like that of the brutes around us. His mental and spiritual nature is like that of his Maker, invisible but still real.

There is a way of securing bodily health, and there is a way of securing mental and spiritual health. It is an error to suppose that our Maker prefers to give each or both to one person any more than to another. He takes an equal interest in all the children of men.

Whosoever follows His rules obtains the benefits attached to them. Action and obedience the Maker delights in, therefore he has appointed for us a life of obedience to Him—a life of activity in His service. A clear perception of our duty is the first step necessary to right action. Unless our idea of duty is clear, our mode of procedure will be vague and confused.

If we have doubts we shall be apt to stand still on the road, or at least, to make poor progress on our journey.

An enquiring mind is, therefore, essential to our welfare and happiness. Unfortunately, the Church quenches inquiry, and requires the substitution of faith in matters all-important to human welfare. It demands of us faith in things impossible to comprehend, and consequently reduces the strength of our minds.

The only faith we should be called upon to have is faith in the efficacy of our Maker's laws.

Every idea we receive into our minds either does us good or injury, according to the quality of the idea. Ideas are the food of the mind, and may, like the food of the body, be unfit for digestion. Christianity possesses many excellent ideas, and hence the esteem in which that creed has been held. The good it is capable of performing, and does actually perform, acquires for it a larger credit than it is entitled to. It makes people accept its shortcomings of doctrine —its miracles and its mysteries, because of certain unmistakeable good it works. The defects of Christianity are seen in the narrowness and prejudice of its followers, who are frequently unfit to discharge the commonest duties of life.

Perfection cannot be reached without the aid of the best minds on behalf of humanity. Unfortunately, most minds are, in early life, bound in fetters. They have, at the outset, been burdened with ideas which for ever after exercise an injurious effect upon them. They have been made to run in false grooves, and, consequently, they fail to effect any real progress. To accept such ideas as miracles, baptismal regeneration, &c., is to divert our minds from the right paths of improvement, and to lead us into mischief and danger. The minds which have resigned themselves to such beliefs, have surrendered much of their capacity of observation. They have sacrificed their power of criticism by subscribing to what is incomprehensible and contradictory. They have smothered their faculty of discriminating truth from error. That every mind ought to be stimulated to examine into every idea placed before it, is a self-evident truth. That the acceptance of erroneous ideas is accompanied with the greatest risk to the receiver is equally patent. Every idea received into the mind, and taking root there, has ramifications whose direction and importance it is not easy to circumscribe; they pervade our whole existence, and according to the idea so is the fruit. If the idea is inaccurate the mind is wholly misled through such inaccuracy.

Look, for instance, at the humiliating picture exhibited by humanity in the exaltation of a successful conqueror—one who has caused the death of thousands in some battle, of which individual glory, or avarice, or ambition, or some other equally worthless object was the cause. What an effect has a mistaken idea wrought here!

Look again at the idea of the damnation by an all-just Being of the millions who have heard, and of others who have never heard of Christ, inclusive of little innocent children; all for an alleged offence of disobedience in the first man by tasting of some fruit!

Or consider the doctrine of the real presence by which the very body of Christ, flesh and blood, is alleged to be found in the tangible, visible bread and wine on the communion table!

Can any one assert, after viewing the humiliating results to which the unquestioned reception of ideas has led in the above instances, that to compel the mind to receive ideas which cannot be understood in a natural sense, is pernicious? The common sense of individuals is overthrown when they are required to give credence to supernatural phenomena, as miracles, and such like. Their individuality is gone. They have given up their reasoning power, and follow the low animal instinct of credulity.

The force of any truth is diminished when it is coupled with a statement which it requires credulity to accept. The belief in miracles, for instance, demands of us an act of violence to our very natures, and consequently those required to accept it often imbibe a repulsion to all religion. The excellent instruction of Jesus Christ would, if unaccompanied by statements of miracles, have inevitably taken hold upon our understandings, but is now frequently lost to us. If the sayings which he uttered are fundamental truths, and there can be no question that many of them are, they had far better be held up to us in all their own simplicity; then their intrinsic worth and power will tell upon us. The miraculous powers attributed to the speaker do not make the truths which he uttered one whit more forcible. On the contrary, we are apt to doubt the honesty of a teaching which needs a subversion of the order of nature to back it up.

As the strength of a chain is no greater than that possessed by the weakest link, so the confidence put in any testimony amounts to little when we perceive that legends and fairy tales are mixed up with it. The benefit which obviously sound instruction is calculated to produce on minds is choked by legendary matter,

though the latter may, from its poetical nature, fascinate and please.

To return to our starting-point, however—happiness is the end, the goal of our earthly pilgrimage; and this goal may be reached by our own proper efforts. The culture of simple principles is all that is necessary for the purpose; and as physical health is obtained by following certain rules of bodily action, so health of mind is got by the practical cultivation of certain moral qualities, *e. g.*, TEMPERANCE, PEACE, LOVE, BENEVOLENCE, CHARITY, INDUSTRY, HONESTY, SINCERITY, PATIENCE, MODERATION, TRUTH, JUSTICE, HUMILITY, CHASTITY. Wherever these qualities abound there is the atmosphere of happiness; and why? because, as experience shows us, these are the qualities that form and build up our spiritual nature. Without these qualities we are less than man: by possessing them we are distinguished from brutes. If there were no existence hereafter; if there were no spiritual life; if all were over as soon as this earthly career ended; the cultivation of these qualities might be less important: but reason tells us that it is not so. In nature we see that nothing is lost: in physical life matter changes from one shape to another; so must it be with regard to our spirits. The spiritual life now in this body will continue to live on in another

sphere. Such being the case, it is the greatest folly not to provide for its well-being and happiness in that future existence; the more so, as the means of doing this are interwoven with those of advancing our happiness in the present.

We have a twofold work on earth to accomplish. The body has a work, and the soul has a work; and according as the functions of each has been employed, so is the measure of satisfaction. The work of the soul deserves, by its nature, to be first considered. It is to imitate the Creator. Unless the soul does this, so far as it is able, it cannot enjoy that tranquillity, that happiness which should belong to it. We know from experience what enjoyment is derived from repose after a fatiguing journey. This is a physical enjoyment. In like manner there is a repose which is derived by the soul each day from its contemplation of work done in harmony with the Divine rules. If any of these rules have been broken or neglected, there results a proportionate amount of discomfort. But the work of the body is no less essential to secure perfect happiness. The body must seek means to obtain the necessary food and clothing for its sustenance, while the soul must seek the nourishment necessary for its sustentation. The body should be employed in some of the many ways of labour or

industry: the soul in the use and cultivation of the mental faculties.

Self-preservation is a great fundamental fact,—a root from which springs the whole of our duty. It embraces, primarily, the well-being of the body; secondarily, that of the mind or spirit. And this great law which enforces our duty to ourselves, clearly enjoins the same duty in respect to others. As we must protect ourselves as members of the great human family, in like manner as each human creature is equally with ourselves the object of our Maker's care, so we are bound to preserve a due respect and care for others with whom we may come into intercourse.

Knowledge of the means to secure happiness involves two other kinds of knowledge: the one a knowledge of the ways of our Maker, the other a knowledge of the ways of man. The first is potent, durable, everlasting in its character, being based on eternal rules. It has a force throughout the universe, and is, when understood, accepted by all mankind of whatever clime, race, or colour, competent to judge of that which is right when it is presented to them. It delineates the government of the spiritual over the material objects of the universe. The second consists of experience of the ways of men, and portrays the government of the material over spiritual things. The

design of our Maker has for its basis the happiness of all His creatures: the design of man has for its basis the well-being of a few individuals. Our Maker's plan for our general well-being is exceedingly simple: the plan of our great men and rulers for the well-being of the few involves the subjection of the many, and is extremely complicated. The ambition of men in all countries has made itself so conspicuous that the misery of the many has risen to the surface of society. It no longer haunts the corners of the earth. It covers the land in a variety of forms.

Our physicians are continually engaged on diseases, while our Churches are equally occupied on the cure of our sins. Thousands of years pass by with little if any alleviation of our condition. There would appear to be a failure of the Divine prescience if this state were to be accepted as permanent. But it cannot be. That splendid piece of mechanism, the human frame, is so evidently the work of a Maker supremely wise and perfect, that it is impossible for Him to err or be mistaken in anything He has designed. The fault is ours; we do not follow out His design.

The knowledge proper to the attainment of happiness must, from the nature of its purpose, be the most simple to comprehend, inasmuch as it is intended for universal use. Unfortunately for humanity, our instruc-

tors in years gone by plucked up by the roots this species of knowledge. They denounced it as a poisonous thing. The Church for many centuries held a monopoly of knowledge. It dealt out such instruction as it pleased, and declared "hitherto shalt thou come and no further." It held the nations of the earth firmly in the net of ignorance, while it destroyed all who dared to produce knowledge differing from its own. The Divine intelligence had provided a way plain and simple, in which all may journey with ease, security, and satisfaction. But owing to the devices of men, the fundamental landmarks were obliterated, and travellers thereby rendered for the most part erring, disheartened, disconsolate creatures.

The Sovereign, who spiritually is related to us, and ought to rule over us, is carefully kept in the background, while others are set up in His place. He who made us is not suffered to rule over us. The human authorities who govern us make laws of their own, without apparently caring to ascertain how little or how much they coincide with the design of the Maker of all things. But unless their laws are in harmony with His will, the experience of numberless ages has shown that nations governed by them inevitably perish. Among various instances of this truth, it is sufficient to mention the Egyptian, the Assyrian, the

Babylonian, the Roman, and the Mexican dynasties. The fall of these nations chiefly resulted from the fact that the laws which guided them were calculated rather to develop the animal than the moral part of nature: for as all animal life ends in dissolution, so the existence of nations based on such laws must come soon or late to an end. It would be far different if the spiritual part of human nature took precedence in systems of government over its animal portion. Having our Maker as the Chief Spirit in our Supreme Head, whose will alone we should follow, we should take up the place which rightly belongs to us in creation as moral agents. With a nature marvellously different from that of brutes we should better understand the object of our Maker if we cultivated aright the spiritual connection which exists between us. Granting to the body the proportion of care and attention which is its due, and which we are bound to bestow, we should seek to develop the higher nature and properties of the soul or spirit within us. The powers of that spirit thus divested of all undue pressure would speedily become manifest. With the Chief Spirit as our Leader and Guide, a vast field of discovery in all that is good and great would be opened to us. Humanity would speedily reach a stage of existence brighter and more glorious than any it has yet contemplated. Pauperism,

misery, disease, crime, wars, would be unknown, except in rude and barbarous parts of the earth. Our knowledge would abundantly increase. All physical nature would be laid open to us. We should rightly understand all the purposes and plans of our Maker in respect to us. We should with the whole thoughts of our mind be devoted to follow His will. We should continually rejoice in our work, well knowing that its consummation would be achieved in His great and glorious presence.

There is a way of securing bodily health, and there is a way of securing spiritual health. It is an error to suppose that our Maker, out of caprice, prefers to give each or both to any one more than to another. He takes the same interest in all the children of men, preferring no one above another. But as a matter of course, whoever follows the rules He has made, that person gets the full benefit of such obedience, while whoever neglects to follow the rules fails to obtain them. These rules are so positive that no one who really follows them out strictly need ever fail in health or morality. There is a compact between our Maker and mankind to this effect,—that if we observe His laws we are sure to maintain ourselves in health and morals. This is to my mind so plain that I believe the time is not far distant when it will be nearly as

much blameworthy to fall into sickness prematurely as it is to be found drunk, or as it is to commit crime. By some fault of our own, some carelessness, some neglect or extravagance, some departure from His rules, either known or unknown, we are brought into what we wish to avoid, namely, ill-health or crime.

Our Maker has bestowed upon all, without distinction, a light to guide them in the search of happiness. He has placed a power in each and all, even the power of observation, which, unless it be debased, obscured, and destroyed, is an instrument sufficient to guide us in the avoidance of evil and in the selection and pursuit of that which is good. Our eyes and our mind are given us to observe and to reflect upon the things which make or mar our well-being.

Life is very much like a journey to a distant country. It has its ups and downs, its difficulties, its trials, its privations, and sufferings. Each human being is travelling onwards, either to happiness or to misery. Now, it may seem startling, yet it will be found true, that the reason why there is so much misery on the earth is to be found chiefly in two parties who have set themselves up as our guardians and guides, who are continually striving, each in its own way, to mitigate our sufferings and to alleviate our distress. It unfortunately happens, however, that

both have adopted wrong methods to accomplish their respective end. Their work is contrary to the course of nature. Instead of being exclusively occupied in finding remedies for us, they should put us in the way not to require their aid. *Prevention and not cure* is the motto which our doctors and our clergy should take. Is it to be supposed that the Almighty, the Creator of all this beautiful universe, ever intended that man, the most highly-favoured of all His creatures, should be living in a perpetual state of doubt, discomfort, sickness, misery, and despair? The state of the largest portion of humanity is far more degrading than that of most classes of the brutes. Can we believe that this is the Maker's will?

What would be said of builders who raised structure after structure on the identical plans and models of other structures, which experience had shown to be defective? And yet is it not true that generation after generation succeed each other, and undergo the same course of instruction, and reach the same unsatisfactory end. Witness the state of our paupers and of our labouring poor. Why do their numbers increase to such an appalling extent? Look into our prisons, how full they are of criminals of all ages. See our lunatic asylums, how they overflow with victims from all ranks of society. Glance at the

dishonesty of our trades-people in their adulterations of our food, and in their falsifications of weights. Look at the numerous bankruptcies which meet the eye daily in the journals, and which tell of the pecuniary instability of our merchant-traders, and others. Consider the frequent strife between workmen and capitalists; and, to look higher, the unbecoming wrangling amongst churchmen, politicians, and others. Again, turn to the Weekly Reports of the Registrar on the Health of the Metropolis, what a lamentable catalogue of casualties meets the eye. Hundreds swept weekly away by death, before they have scarcely commenced the journey of life, to say nothing of many who perish by unnatural means. Whichever way we turn, there is a gloomy account to render.

Well may we say, if this be a true picture of things, that it is high time to consider our position. We require a measure of happiness at once durable and abiding; enjoyment in this world, and in a world to come. This we are entitled to, and should have. It is our birthright, and we should not rest until we make ourselves masters of the way to obtain it.

Divested of other considerations, happiness consists as we have seen, of health of body, and health of mind. Real and solid health and not spurious and fanciful imitations thereof. Without these two con-

ditions—health of body and of mind—Man does not fulfil the purposes of his being, any more than he can be said to enjoy happiness. With these two conditions rightly directed and understood, he is sure to possess, whatever his station, a constant fund of the richest gratification on earth during a long life, while he may look forward to the expectation of enjoying another existence in a sphere to which in the natural order of events he will be removed when the present life terminates.

The attribute of the laws of physical and mental health is continual enjoyment. The legitimate gratification of all our animal faculties being secured, our very life may be said to run in its natural channel—the course marked out first by the Creator, and it is only in that channel that the desires and passions will find rest and satisfaction. Then as to the higher faculties, what is there to compare with the enjoyment to be derived from a well cultivated mind? The legitimate employment of these two great functions of our nature is what really constitutes human happiness, the goal that all should aim at. But, how oblivious are most of this supremely important fact!

Few of us concern ourselves about the laws of health. Is it not the usual practice to live as it were by chance, eating and drinking as we happen to like,

or be tempted by the things set before us; and frequently to incur illness by our imprudence in this respect? Ought this to be so? Should we continue to trifle with one of the most valuable and most sacred of all our possessions which enters into the foundation of our happiness?

The body of man may be compared to a fine piece of machinery. Any one at all acquainted with well constructed machinery, knows how quietly and smoothly the whole works; there is no jarring, no opposition, no noise, everything moves on in harmony, and so it should be with respect to the human frame, and its working. Every animal function should be performed with ease, regularity, and comfort. There should be no labouring, nor pain, nor discomfort. Whenever this is the case, some law has been broken, or is being broken, and disease has commenced, and pain, misery, and perhaps death will be the consequence. The extent of the loss of life is something amazing through ignorance of the laws which govern the human body. We must have some knowledge of these laws before we can expect to maintain it in a state of health. It fortunately happens that the dealings of our Maker with men are exceedingly plain and simple; and we would be wise if we tried to understand them, and did not substitute devices of

our own in their place, so as to frustrate His benevolent calculations for our benefit.

It should be noticed that the objects which we ought to obtain, or reach, in order to acquire happiness, are of a class very different from those usually sought by men. They have this great distinguishing feature, that they do not in themselves excite envy or the hatred of others, but rather admiration and love. Health, learning, humility, charity, patience, labour, these are among the things which belong to our happiness, and they displease no one, but contribute to the constant good of mankind. A course, the whole world may pursue beneficially, is surely right. Whereas the acquisition of money, or rank, or influence, all tend to stir up strife. The race for wealth, honours, rank, power, and such like objects, is a dangerous and uncertain pursuit. Very few attain these things, and their attainment too often fails to secure happiness. The holders of these incur responsibilities of a nature which they scarcely estimated rightly. Wealth, possessions, rank, influence, power, deprive the possessors too frequently of the enjoyment of the higher virtues which form the chief happiness of life.

It is an error to suppose that there is a special providence watching over the welfare of any individual

or race of people. All our Maker's creatures are equally the objects of His care. There are several rules which relate to us all, and so long as we run in harmony with these, we enjoy happiness.

This is the great fact which it concerns us to know, and any attempt to set up a system compounded of rules distinct from this general economy of the universe, will and must result in disappointment; any perseverance in such a special system after it has been set up, must be productive of unhappiness.

We blame not others for the creeds they have adopted, perhaps from their infancy. All we ask of them is to examine what they are trusting to; to "prove all things," before they trust any. Life is freighted with too precious a cargo to be trifled with, and made a shipwreck. Let us make sure that the way we take is the right one.

Thus briefly have I attempted to depict the goal of life—a goal shrouded from our view by the mists of error and prejudice. Much of what I have written has been necessarily vague. It is impossible to afford a clear perception of what happiness is, until some of the clouds around its summit have been dispelled. So that a great portion of the task before me will consist in attempting to expose some of the most prevalent misconceptions, both as to the nature of happiness

itself, and as to the best means of attaining it upon the part of those who have taken up the function of guides in the path of human progress.

If the evidences of Christianity are sufficient for us, how is it they were not enough to enlighten the Jews, the principal persons concerned in the matter. They were present when the transactions occurred on which Christianity is based. They might have witnessed all the scenes, and yet they do not to this day believe the accounts of them. They have been persecuted to death from that day to almost our own age, in one way or other, and they prefer death rather than accept notions and beliefs inimical to Theism. They are a standing witness against Christianity.

If the death of Christ was a most cruel act on the part of the Jewish priesthood—and who can doubt it?—how much more cruel ought we not to regard that event when it is presented to us as the sacrifice, on the part of our Maker, of his only Son. If the ignorant Jews could perpetrate so gross a crime, how are we to understand the participation in it of a righteous God? His goodness, however great, can never make a bad act right. Ignorant men are, to this day, led by their passions to commit all manner of evil, but how can we consent to believe that a perfect God could condescend to any similar act? He has bestowed on us an

instrument by which to judge of the quality of all actions, and when we put the death of Christ by the Jews into the scales of our judgment, we cannot but pronounce it a most guilty transaction. In like manner, if we are called to consider the same act in relation to God, we weigh it in the scales which He has furnished us, and we cannot do otherwise than perceive it to be unjustifiable murder. The measure which our Maker has planted within us is true; it cannot both affirm and deny the same proposition. It is only through some fallacy on the part of our instructors that we have been persuaded to receive, as truth, a false idea into our minds. The affirmation of thousands of people, whoever they are or were, cannot make that true which is radically false. We can comprehend the guilty Jews committing so unjust an act, but we cannot comprehend a perfect God, our Maker, consenting in any way to the same. We expect to find all the transactions of one so perfect as our Maker to be perfect, whereas thus to confound justice and truth is both to dishonour Him who formed us, and to stultify ourselves. Why should we be forced to call that sweet which we perceive to be bitter? The instrument of truth in us demands that we should denounce the transaction, however presented, as a most horrible one. Our judicial faculty must be

lamentably low if we fail to discern that the alleged participation of our Maker, in the death of his Son, is an unrighteous transaction and totally foreign to Him. Better suffer a thousand deaths than blindly support so startling a proposition. Far nearer the truth would it be to affirm that some good though ignorant men, desirous to draw their fellow-creatures towards a life of goodness, devised the idea of holding up to view the estimate of God's idea of sin. According to these men, our Maker's hatred of sin was so great, and his love to the world so amazing, that he sacrificed His only Son in order that we should contemplate the act in the light in which it is presented, and so bring man to holiness.

Many, undoubtedly, are melted into tears in realising the idea thus presented. The picture of a good man, one giving up his whole life to works of charity, condemned to die the most degraded of deaths, that of the cross, is enough to make the heart to mourn. But sympathy may not be religion. It may involve nothing of the knowledge of our Maker's ways, and therefore fail in its purpose. It is nothing that thousands have lived and died in the faith of the dogma as a fundamental truth of Christianity. Have we not the dogma of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, and do we not know how that was

promulgated? Look again at the hundreds of bishops who, only a year or two ago, decided at an Œcumenical Council held in Rome on the infallibility of the Pope, and then consider the worth of testimony which supports dogmas.

The fact is, if our Maker ever meant the death of Christ to have such a signification as it now bears, it would, ere this, have achieved more lasting results. The magnificent importance of the transaction would have spread with amazing velocity through the world. It would never have met any serious check in any quarter which it could not overcome. But what say the cold ruins of the Seven Churches in Asia? and what is the present testimony of millions of people in Europe who once believed in this dogma? With light to guide them of a brightness more convincing than they have before experienced, and, under the shadow of a liberty now impossible to deprive them of, they declare that this, and transactions of a like nature, are little else than devices, however creditable to the amiability of men, yet far beneath the purposes and plans of the Maker of all.

The people of a certain province of India, from time to time, have human sacrifices. They offer them up to propitiate their god in order to avert failure to their crops. This observance dates from time immemorial

amongst them. Analogous to the idea which obtains among Christians, it is equally absurd, the one being about as efficacious as the other to attain the end proposed.

Is Christianity, then, a vain and useless institution? Not so. Any scheme which brings people to know the valuable principles of the Maker has, so far, good in it. The followers of Christ are required to know and conform to some, if not all, of the divine, immutable principles; and thus far a good work is being performed. Their lives are doubtless better cultivated than if they were heathens. But incomparably better would be their lives, far greater would their amelioration be, if they renounced the fables of their creed, and seized fast on the principles of the great and everlasting One. Christianity has seen its best days. It has done a wonderful deal of good, but must give place to something brighter and more glorious. Christianity refuses to be progressive. A dissolution must be the consequence.

Every institution not based upon scientific truth must crumble soon or late in spite of all interests and support however powerful, of tradition however ancient and honourable. It carries within it the germ of dissolution; gradually its foundations are sapped as science pours in its flood of light, and the fabric

must fall. When was there a power greater than the Papacy? For how many centuries did it govern Europe? yet what is it now but a thing of the past, —its splendour but tinsel?

To the modes in which Christianity is taught may be attributed much of its present loss of power. A man famishing for the want of spiritual things enters a grand cathedral. He hears fine music, etc., but not an idea reaches his mind to admonish him in his ways, or to guide him in his path. The sermon, which should be plain and instructive, is too often dull and interlarded with ideas which neither preacher nor audience can understand. The services are well performed, the singing is good, and the chanting excellent in their way, everything, in short, in keeping with the stateliness of the edifice; and yet when the service is over the poor thirsty soul escapes into the outer air not one bit refreshed or strengthened or enlightened. He is as much in the dark as ever. He sees his way through the world no better than before. He may admire all that he has seen and heard, but he has not received one atom of real spiritual nourishment. His eyes and senses may have been captivated with sweet scenes and sounds, but his understanding—his soul—has not benefited one particle. It is not, then, the immensity of the building nor the gorgeousness of the appoint-

ments that benefit, or through which a cure is effected. Better far is the silent application at home in one's closet of facts to the mind. Holiness, like cleanliness, is best obtained by the honest application of the right means in our homes when we are least apt to be disturbed by external thoughts.

The rise and progress of Christianity has been so wonderful and extensive that we may affirm it contains much of truth. It is by reason of this element of truth that it prevailed over error and obtained a circulation. That truth we should endeavour to discover and separate from the error which surrounds it. But we want something more accurate, exact, truthful. Some theory better calculated to promote the happiness and perfectibility of man. Christianity is but a compromise between Paganism and Judaism. Were it offered to us at this time it would be rejected. When upwards of 1800 years ago it was placed before mankind, it arrived opportunely on the ruins of other systems. It was an improvement upon all that was then known, and it became acceptable in more ways than one.

Christianity is not a creed wide enough to embrace all nations. People will not believe in it; it is not adapted to their understandings. They will not consent to its propositions, consequently it is not calcu-

lated to include them in its fold. Unless the plan which is to regenerate mankind is general in its principles it cannot be true, because it is not applicable everywhere. The Author of Christianity urged all men to accept the kingdom of God. The real kingdom of God is that wherein His laws alone are the guide and rule of mankind. This kingdom once established will indeed purify and elevate mankind beyond anything yet conceived. It would obtain for them abundant blessings far more than our present condition can realise. God would become the real head. His spirit would preside over our minds, and guide our whole thoughts and conduct. We should continually have Him presiding over us spiritually, from which circumstance would come to us a multitude of suggestions of infinite value to us in this life, and which would prepare and ripen us for the life beyond. And with Him as our real practical guide here, we should feel no repugnance, no fear, no alarm to go to Him at death. We should not be so wedded to life if we knew more of God; and to know Him better is to have no one stand between us and Him.

If Christ were divine in the sense held by the Church, his teaching would be sound, practical, and unimpeachable. What is the value of a bridge if you cannot at all times go over it? But is not the con-

trary the fact? A few instances are as good as many to illustrate this. For example, sin appears in us as soon as we cease to cultivate our minds and our spirit. The strength and vigour of our higher nature must be kept up and preserved by exercise in reading and examining the works of God and of other spirits like ourselves who have gone before us, and whose experience is valuable. There are many branches of useful knowledge in which it is necessary to employ or cultivate, which is the same thing, our minds and spirits. But we must, above all, never forget the best, purest exercise for the spirit; its communion or prayers of gratitude to our Maker, and in the reading of pure and holy thoughts in relation to Him. Such exercise should at least be observed twice a-day, morning and evening; it should be a real, earnest, sincere reunion of the entire family,—a heart-felt and, at the same time, a sacred exercise, because it invokes the presence of God. Our spirits bow before the Eternal. We pretend to come before Him; and unless we really do so for the purposes of spiritual good, we retire out of His sight as empty as we came. We have but mocked Him and ourselves.

In his simple and beautiful model-prayer Jesus asks God to forgive us our sins. Now anyone who knows the philosophy of life, moral and physical, will see that the laws of God do not permit the forgiveness

of sin. What is sin that it should be forgiven? Sin, the act, is identical with the evil, the result: it is the non-cultivation of either our moral qualities on the one hand, or a neglect by our spirit of the discipline of the body. Remove light from a room, and you must have darkness. Take away heat, and you have cold. In like manner sin or evil are natural consequences, which appear in the way God has appointed. He will neither pardon nor efface sin, nor free us from disease except by our resorting to His Rules. God will have His laws obeyed, and the penalty which He has attached to the violation of His laws He wisely makes visible to all His creatures, as far as the body is concerned, so that we may observe and avoid the ways which produce evil. It is far more merciful in God to exhibit to us the consequence of any departure from His laws than, by His forgiveness at our asking, to create a confusion in our minds as to the nature and force of any particular law.

Again, Christ describing the day of judgment says, the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and, dividing all nations into two great parties, he will say to those on the right, "Come," etc., while to those on the left he will say, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." And why? "For I was an hungered," etc. This is preaching bene-

volence with a vengeance! It neither teaches us our duty, nor does it elevate our conception of the character of the Judge. In Matt., chap. xxiii., He commences, "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites," etc. "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers," etc. This is scarcely the way in which to address people whom you wish to convince, especially when he declares that he was especially sent to convert the Jews. To abuse those roundly at the very moment when you most require their attention, is the most effectual way of losing all power over them. Besides, what man having the truth and handling it need dispense it in such a manner? All kinds of truth require patient and careful explanation before they can be received and understood. How foolish a man of science would appear who commenced a lecture, say on electricity, by cursing or denouncing his hearers because they did not believe in his definitions or manipulations. It is not surprising that the Jews did not believe in Christ, employing, as he did, the most awful denunciations. Right indeed were the Jews to have withstood the new superstition, which was then preparing to encompass the nations round about. They would have believed but for their monotheism. They deserve immense credit for having so nobly withstood all the persecutions which they have been exposed to, and

which they have endured for many centuries at the hands of many, and, alas! from Christian nations. God has evidently made manifest in them the power of His laws in preserving them to this day, in so far that their meekness and their industry obtain for them prosperity wherever they go, while they are also a living witness of God's power to protect them who own Him alone as the Supreme Jehovah.

Again, in Matthew Jesus tells the young man to keep the commandments, and when asked which, He proceeds to say, "Thou shalt do no murder," etc. This recital of the law as given by Moses, with the admonition to love our neighbour as ourself, did not show forth a Divine Teacher, for it fell far short of the teaching of God's ways. The youth in question, with everybody else in those days, was familiar with such instruction. A Divine Teacher, if such a one ever appeared, would know how to teach in a manner so that his mission should not fail, and he himself not be persecuted and his life destroyed. A Divine Teacher, claiming to be equal with the Creator of all things, should be able to do more than merely repeat the Levitical law. He would be familiar with all the sanatory and moral laws of God, and be ready and willing patiently to explain them to men. Failing to do this, we are compelled to believe that his followers

claimed too much for him, more indeed by far than he claimed for himself.

The sacrifice of Christ for our sins being an unjust act, the suffering of the innocent for the guilty could never have been contemplated by God. Such an act, if approved by God, would set at defiance all harmony with the order of what is called Nature. And yet we are required to believe that the crime perpetrated by the Jews was with the design and approval of God. It is so unjust an act that it can never be construed into a virtue. Nor need we be surprised in our day to find in one place where such ideas prevail a man exalting himself above the world, ready to proclaim his own infallibility and make a God of himself, while in other places we see men, professing the utmost humility yet consent to rank with princes and to surround themselves with all the paraphernalia of wealth and state, and form so strong a contrast to that meek and lowly Jesus who said his kingdom was not of this world.

Christ's sacrifice is altogether an imperfect act. It rests also on an imperfect argument. It is said to be an evidence of God's love to the world. God's love to the world is shown in many ways; but to injure the innocent is surely not one of them. It is not the way of attracting mankind. But then the design has been to paint sin as particularly abhorrent to God, so

much so that it required the sacrifice of "His own Son" to rid the world of sin. Unfortunately for the panacea, it has not yet succeeded. There is plenty of sin in the world, and there always will be until people are better taught what sin is, and how it is to be shunned and eradicated. God has made laws in respect to sin, and those laws He will have obeyed. That is the denunciation of a wise and good Lawgiver. But the idea of God being the first to break His laws, and that too in so cruel a manner, is at once as impious to think of, as it is injurious in its consequences. This is one of many erroneous ideas which must be abandoned, however sacredly they may have been held and cherished by us. Before we can have correct views as to the course of our duty, we must cease to entertain degrading notions of the Great Creator.

"He that giveth to the poor lendeth unto the Lord." This is another text of Christianity which diverts men from their real duty, and tends to increase the number of paupers. This and similar teaching does more to pauperise a nation than can well be imagined. A knowledge of hygienic laws and the cultivation of their mental and spiritual powers will alone raise men. Ignorance in this particular swells the number of paupers. It is only by sheer effort of our own that

we shall be raised from one condition to a superior one of intelligence and happiness, until at last we shall understand all that God designs, all that our Maker has in store for us. Death itself, instead of being regarded as a calamity, will, if rightly understood, be welcomed as the event which ushers us into the glorious presence of the Everlasting.

It is a pity that such stories as those of the Old Testament should form part of the instruction of our youth, and still more so that a learned bishop should allow himself, at this time of day, to devote his time and talent in bringing into unnecessary prominence certain Hebrew worthies, and investing them with an air of sanctity which existed only in legend; outraging truth, when they had better lie buried and forgotten. So also it is a pity that circulation should be given to the exploded teaching of the Old Testament writers. The sayings of the wise king Solomon, many of them doubtlessly good and true, are mixed up with much of ignorance. Some have a very evil tendency, and should be noted as such. For instance, what is more silly than the way in which knowledge is depreciated!

He says he had studied all things, and had acquired more knowledge than all men, and then affirms that knowledge brings sorrow, &c. This is another instance

in which designing men, for political purposes, check the growth of knowledge, because it giveth power to the possessor, whereas to keep the people in ignorance is to seal their weakness. There is not a more foolish text than this in the whole book. In proportion as we have knowledge is our real happiness; for the clearer we see our way through this life, the more safe and satisfactory each step becomes.

"The fire which never quenches"—that everlasting flame—is another invention of the Eastern mind; which while, through fear, it drives many people into Christianity, at the same time is so repulsive, so cruel, that a poor sinner suddenly awakened into a knowledge of the error of his ways, and unable to embrace the dogmas of Christianity, is so perplexed in his weakness, that he is overwhelmed by the agony into which these visions plunge him, so that his despair either sees him end his life in madness or suicide.

"The resurrection of the body," and "the forgiveness of sins," are two ideas directly contrary to all God's doings. Sound experience, if closely pressed, will answer that they are perfectly fallacious. Nor are they at all necessary or desirable in the economy of the universe as settled by the Almighty Maker. The resurrection of the body! Why should I desire it? My body is only the animal portion of me—the

tenement inhabited by my soul. The only place where it can exist is on earth. A thing made of clay, only intended to last a short while, and made of the earth. Never meant to endure longer than this life, whereas my soul is eternal. There is an ascension of my spirit, but no resurrection of my body. Then as to the other dogma, the forgiveness of sins, that also sounds very flattering, and well calculated, as it was doubtless intended to be, to catch the attention of the ignorant and the simple minded; but how is the fact in this particular. What is God's treatment of us in relation to sin? In other words, how does He act towards the sinner? The idea of the forgiveness of sins is quite human and artificial, and, like many other of the ideas of Christianity, was borrowed of the Jews. The forgiveness of sins would no more repair the character of a sinner than would a like dispensation convert a desert into a fruitful garden. Then what is the practical good or value of forgiveness? Would not the pardon of one score of sins encourage the commission of another score? The right and only way to improve the character of men is to train and cultivate them in ways conformable to the paths of God; *i. e.*, in harmony with peace, and virtue, and well-doing. Sin is a moral evil, a spot on the purity of the soul, as disease is a physical evil, a spot on the health of the

body. Both are the effects of ignorance on the part of humanity. There are paths of good as well as of evil. They can only be effectually kept or learnt by knowledge. If the spirit of man is kept in continual and wholesome exercise and support, in an intelligent manner seeking after the fruits of the spirit, there is no chance of sin getting a footing in such a man. No more than, if a field were properly cultivated and duly planted with something useful, could briars and thorns appear. The question with us should be, what crop of actions are we working for? God has a settled order in relation to all things, and it is not His practice to go out of His way and disregard that order. To do so would be to compromise His work, and create confusion. To step in and prevent the operation of His design in respect to sin, would be to delay human improvement. The sooner we understand the nature of sin, and the means of its cure, the better will it be for humanity if we adopt it. We must submit to His ways of treating us, and not be so arrogant as to ask Him to step out of His way to forgive us. Indeed, one of the most injurious ideas we can get into our heads is this one of the forgiveness of sins. Instead of affording light to our path, it obscures it, and therefore does us more harm than good. As purity and health of body and soul are worth having, pains must

be taken to get them, and keep them when obtained. There is no royal road to attain these ends, and God will no more acquit us of sin than He will free us from any disease we contract. But if we scrutinise the nature of the sin or disease which affects us, and apply the appropriate means to eradicate it from our persons and spirit, doubtless in due time we shall succeed in cleansing ourselves from it, whatever it be. And the experience so gained will be invaluable, both to us and to humanity. God does nothing except gradually. That is how He works. To forgive sins, if that were possible, implies the work of a moment.

The forgiveness of sin cannot operate in favour of the recipient, as there is no connection, no consequence between the act of forgiveness and an amended life. Reform is the one thing necessary. To forgive is to excuse, to hide, to slur over—condone—all which tend to perpetuate the evil; but to reform by instruction, and to walk in harmony with God's ways, is to enter upon a course of improvement and of hope. The forgiveness of sin, or crime, or debt, or whatever else between man and man, does not exonerate the subject before the Maker of all things, who is our judge. We should clearly understand the immovable, unchangeable nature of His laws, both in respect to crime or sin, and in respect to that which is good and virtuous.

There are grades of evil as well as grades of good; the confines of one seem to touch the other. It is for us to use all diligence to discern and to examine where and how we are working, whether in fields of usefulness and good, or whether we are passing our lives in idleness and running them to waste.

If the prayers of the whole Bench of Bishops were offered to arrest the progress of a mortal dose of laudanum, though taken accidentally, they would be found totally unavailing; how much less efficacious would such prayers be, if offered to atone for crime against immutable laws?

The whole history of the resistance of the Jews to the Gospel is something well calculated to excite our deepest attention. It is sufficient in itself to prove that its scheme was human, and in direct opposition to the mind of God. The Gospel as preached by Christ was very different to the Gospel as preached by the Apostles and Disciples, and the Church now. Some Jews would doubtless have listened to his teachings and become converted, because his words were of the truth; but immediately that his divinity was preached, it failed to convince them—the very people he was sent to—and the cause is plain enough. It was simply impossible for the minds of men who had long worshipped the one and only true God to accept a second and a

third person into their ideas of a godhead. They considered this conception idolatrous, and the fact of their persistence in this view, amidst all the persecutions which they subsequently for ages suffered throughout Europe, is abundant proof that God never meant they should exchange their worship of Him alone for that of others sharing the godhead with Him. It is quite right and natural, then, that the Jew should for 1800 years resist, as he does now, the acceptance of Christianity, as it is equally natural that Pagan nations should, if properly influenced, be converts to it. Idolatrous notions will not spread, except in minds already possessed by such ideas. Nor are the Jews alone in this respect. The followers of Mahomet are worshippers of one God only. They number millions more than all Christians, and it is next to impossible to convert them to the Christian creed, notwithstanding its, in many respects, superior instruction. The great stumbling block is now, as it was of old, the idolatrous element, which no adult person not already brought up in it would maintain ; but rather he would reject for the unquestionably superior, and beyond all doubt more certain and safe, worship of God alone. Set free any Christian's mind from the theological trammels in which it is bound, cast aside all superstitious notions which as mysteries it has in early youth been per-

suaded to receive, and show him a safer way in which he may trace the course of his life, and he will soon elect to travel in it. Christianity destroys itself in the ready way in which its superstitions are developed. Some years since the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was promulgated, and now the Infallibility of the Pope is made the chief subject of acceptance at the Œcumenical Council. Protestantism may and does object to any such developments within its own pale, but that is owing to the liberal, enlightened views of the age in which we live. The root of superstition dwells in the Church, and is ready, especially in some quarters, to branch out vigorously were it permitted; quarters in which there is so large a sympathy with Rome that we can with difficulty see much difference between them.

The Council of Nice settled the long-disputed question of Christ's Divinity. It is in this manner that the religious beliefs of the Church have been formed. Men interested to advance and to maintain certain doctrines meet together and proclaim what they call truth. Your imagination receives a strain which it never recovers. You are unable to judge of the value of the doctrines you are made to receive, for they are wholly beyond comprehension. They are like indigestible meats, which tell injuriously on the system. Not

so eternal truths. Of them each one can judge for himself; for your experience of the consequences of each proposition will enable you to recognise whether they belong to human or everlasting principles. The teaching of St. Paul was full of earnestness. He believed what he taught, but for all that he may have taught error as well as truth. The world in which he lived believed in miracles. The people by whom he was surrounded were full of credulity. And without imputing to him any evil design, nor indeed any pious frauds, it may be readily conceived that his preaching Christ crucified was just what might be expected of a man like him abounding in credulity, prejudice, and enthusiasm. The wonder would be, not that Paul believed in the prejudice of the age in which he lived, but the contrary. Brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, the Jewish teacher of the day, he became versed in the Jewish belief. He was, as he tells us, an active member of the synagogue, actually engaged in persecuting the Christians. Subsequently he embraced the schism of the day, namely Christianity, and he gives an extraordinary account of what occurred to him on the road to Damascus. The idea of substituting one sacrifice, that of Christ, for all the sacrifices common to the Jewish church, was reasonable and progressive; but after all it was plainly a human compromise. And it

is more than probable, that if after the death of Christ his followers did not commit the mistake of making a god of him, many Jews would have united themselves to the new creed, proclaimed in such excellent instruction as was taught by the great teacher and lover of humanity in the Sermon on the Mount. This sermon embraces, considering the time and place, a remarkable collection of everlasting principles proving the harmony of the preacher's mind in the ways of our Maker. And wise will be that people who shall have the courage to discover and separate these great truths from the error which human frailty has added to them, whether designedly or otherwise.

CHAPTER II.

BLIND GUIDES.

It scarcely admits of question that people in general have ceased to believe, as they once did, in what are called the great doctrinal truths of their respective creeds. It is well that this should be so. The mind is thereby in course of preparation to receive better instruction. The ground is being broken up for seed which will produce more lasting fruit. Superstitious notions are losing their hold, and men are about to emerge from the domains of imagination into those of reality. The Almighty never has left His creatures without evidence of His truth. His rules have been continually in force, and people at all times, as far as they have obeyed them, have benefited. Unhappily for mankind, the rules of the Creator are overlaid to such an extent by the inventions of men, that it is not easy to distinguish the divine from the human. Eternal realities are so mingled with earthly artificialities, that the efficacy of the first are lost sight of.

Repose is so sweet that man mistakes it for his normal condition. Duty and obedience are felt to be irksome, and in order to shirk these, our teachers have invented ways by which we may enjoy the hope of entering heaven without the fatigues attendant on the journey. Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Mahometanism, and all other forms of religion, possess a substratum of our Maker's laws. However overlaid by special doctrines distinctive of each, yet within each the rules of the Almighty exist. Man, the tyrant, has to some extent injured the claims of the Creator. Man exacts more than he ought from his fellows. But the laws of God are so well devised that, when once the mind obtains a clear perception of them, they work with a success and facility as complete as could be desired. These laws are indeed the true Providence of the Supreme Being. In them is His wisdom centered, so far as His relation to us is concerned. Beautiful in their economy and working, in them is found that bond which connects man with his Maker.

As the laws which our Maker appointed for the growth of corn are the same now as they were thousands of years ago, so the principles which govern the growth and production of human qualities, whether physical or moral, were settled ages ago, before all Prophets, Apostles, and other teachers appeared.

They are the same principles to-day as they were then, and will remain the same, in spite of all that alleged messengers of the Deity may say or do to the contrary. He is the same unchangeable Maker. He is not a man that is turned from His purposes, either to the right or to the left.

He has appointed a way for the safety and improvement of mankind, and something has to be done to reach it. Principles have to be put in motion, and then follows the result. It is not belief in a Saviour that makes our salvation. Belief in God himself would not save, much less trust in any subordinate being, human or divine. But to do our duty in the manner which the Maker has appointed with regard to our bodies and to our souls, and towards Himself and towards our fellow-creatures, *that* will save a man if anything will. It is not therefore belief, but action which is essential.

I wish to go to St. Paul's church. I believe it stands in the City of London ; but unless I know the way, and unless I take it, I may never reach it. So it is with regard to our Maker. We must know the way to Him, and take it. We must actually walk in it : simple belief in Him will not suffice. The path which leads to the kingdom of Happiness is yet unrevealed. As the route from Europe to India round

the Cape of Good Hope was unknown for countless ages, and its manifold benefits consequently lost to mankind, so the path which I speak of is hidden from us. We continue as heretofore to roam about in our ignorance. Instead of discerning the real route to this kingdom, and then faithfully keeping to it we set up ways of our own. Our institutions are not based on everlasting rules; and they consequently fail. Such has been the fate of human institutions in times past, and so it ever will be until we know how to distinguish between what is real and perpetual and what is only imaginary and fleeting. How shall we discover this path which we seek?

If we look abroad on the objects around, the hills, the valleys, the rivers, the fields, the crops, the trees, all are beautiful and all are perfect of their kind. They come from the hand of a Great Being, who has given to each and all their appointed place and use. And if He has made these things perfect is it likely that he has forgotten or neglected to appoint a way for the perfection of man, his best and highest work?

Knowledge, to be of real value, should be thoroughly ours. In any plans for our happiness we should thoroughly see our way, otherwise we waver and end our days in perplexity, gloom, and sorrow. It unfortunately happens that we are called to believe, and

put implicit faith in many imaginary truths ; whereas our duty is clearly to follow the rules of our Maker, for the establishment of our well-being. We have to ascertain by the light which He has placed within us what these laws are. Among the thoughts which should occupy before all others, a place in the mind of every rational being is, the idea of our Maker. Our souls should have impressed upon them the stamp, as it were, of the everlasting, the glorious Being who formed us and the universe. This impression should be as clear, as simple, and as expressive as is possible. We know from our birth our natural father. We should learn at the earliest period possible of our lives the chief characteristics of our Spiritual Head. It is an acquaintance, a study rather, which we cannot too early form. We owe Him all things, life, health, and every privilege we possess ; and as He is the fountain of all goodness, and of all knowledge, it is manifestly to our great advantage that our first knowledge should be of Him. If He occupy the first place in our minds, it is evident that our characters will be made to harmonise with His will ; for they are moulded according to our knowledge. If we know something of the character of our Maker, that something, being pure and holy, entering our mind, purifies it. There is an analogy in this

respect between the body and the soul. If we take unwholesome food into the body, the consequence may be fatal to life, certainly injurious; and so it is in the mind or spirit. According to the ideas which we admit into the mind, so will our mind become either healthy, amiable, lovely, and happy, or corrupt, disagreeable, and miserable. If my mind is fed with good, moral, and spiritual thoughts, my actions and life are controlled by those thoughts; my time is filled up in virtuous ways, my spirit is cultivated under the eye of the most perfect of spirits.

One character in which our Maker stands conspicuous, is that of Benevolence. Love is the principle which moves the Maker towards man in all his dealings, and we cannot do better than imitate in this respect the All-Perfect. Love is the only safe foundation on which to build all human action. We are all related to one another, and as a man looks with tenderness on the failings or sins of his own brother or sister, so ought we to regard with compassionate interest the misdeeds of any individual of the human family. For are not all failings held up to us for our admonition. Are they not lessons for our instruction and guidance; are they not warnings for us, beacons to show us where danger is, and to guide us from error! Charles Lamb exemplified this when he undertook

the charge of his unhappy sister, who had murdered their parent. Something of the affection which he displayed should be ours when we are called to contemplate the errors of any of our fellow-creatures. It will be said that poor Miss Lamb was irresponsible, for she had totally lost her reason. True; but in like manner, though in a lesser degree, the reasoning faculty of all who commit error is injured. Let it be remembered that it is not by censuring others that we mend their ways and teach them to go right; but by convincing them of the right way, in order that they may contrast it with their previous line of conduct.

It is not in sacrifices, nor in ceremonies, nor in mediators, nor in the intercessions of priests, nor in almsgiving, that the regeneration which we require is to be found. All these are lazy devices of men. We must look to effectuate the perfection of mankind in some other way than these. Man being directly responsible to his Maker for the course he pursues in this life, it is necessary for him to know with certainty, what the nature of his actions should be, in order to inherit the Divine favour, and in due time obtain an entrance into the after life. The way of frightening people into virtue by alarming them with the torments of eternal fires may have answered its purpose while the mind was enslaved in ignorance;

but all this is changed. Such a threat, while it brings the goodness of the Divine character into question, serves admirably to plant in the mind seeds of credulity of which unhappily there is abundance; and which with other false notions cling like weeds to the mind with such tenacity as to prevent its natural growth and power.

It is only by thoroughly knowing the nature of our obligations, and the course we ought to pursue, that there is a chance of following them. As time deepens the real track of our duties to make them perceptible to us, let us do what we can to make the way plain to others, rather than confuse the mind with false issues which cannot but disturb the wayfarer.

To deal in mysteries, to declare that the dispensations of our Maker are mysterious, is but to confound all knowledge of Him. When we consider the cruelty, the crime, the disease, the pauperism, the degraded state of the poor; when age after age, we see little if any amendment in these things; when we consider that the great and the rich, whether princes or priests, countenance this condition of things, and do nothing practical to amend it, should we be surprised at the disloyalty to both divine and human government which exists amongst the lowest class in the scale of society? There is

certainly no love between them and the great. And if the poor bear no affection for the latter, whom they see, how can they know, or trust Him, whom they do not see, but whose arrangement of all things leaves them so miserable. They see in the drudgery and misery of their class an abandonment of themselves. They are forsaken, as it were, to a cruel fate. And from the ruin around them they infer the absence of a Supreme Controller. They can neither understand the dogma, which they are taught, nor can they comprehend the fate they suffer, and they run in their blindness into the mire of Atheism.

The more clear the way is made for us, the greater the probability that it will be followed. All obscurity therefore should be left out in this instruction :— wherever there is any doubt, mystery, or opposition to our Maker's laws, that cannot be the way for man to adopt; for everything required of him will be found simple and in harmony with our Maker's views.

It being then admitted, as I think it must, that the way which is clearest to human intelligence is the right one, I shall proceed to notice a few of the attempts which have been made by ignorant and delusive guides to shroud the path of happiness in mystery and confusion, and I shall begin by indicating a fundamental error of instruction. We are commonly

told imperatively, and without the shadow of a reason, that we must not do this or that. Suppose we were being instructed in the art of preserving health, and we were admonished not to catch fever, nor cholera, nor to fall into fits, I fear we should not be much the better for the advice. What we require is the knowledge of the way to prevent disease. So also we require instructions to prevent us falling into sin or evil. To know and cultivate ways of goodness leads us into happiness: and through that knowledge and cultivation alone we avoid evil. What we obviously require, then, is to know what qualities we should cultivate, and the best way to cultivate them.

The misery of the great majority of mankind arises from the fact that society has set a false value upon many things. Actual life is a sort of race, in which the prizes are, rank, titles, wealth, power, and place, all of them really incidentals to happiness, but not essentials. And as all cannot gain these prizes, but only a few, there is great failure and disappointment. This folly should cease. The issues ought to be wholly different. We should run for the essentials of happiness,—these we are sure to win, and with them we shall be happy.

Oh, Bishops, men of learning, piety, and goodness, when will ye study to confine yourselves to these things? when will ye separate yourselves from the

false gods of society? Why will ye continue to give éclat to the pride of rank, and wealth, and influence, when ye should above all exalt virtue and excellence? Your acceptance of wealth and position, your very greediness to obtain them, encourage men whom you profess to lead to indulge in false conceptions of truth. They see you who ought to be models of righteousness run after wealth and worldly influence, and can they be blamed if they too ardently follow after such things? Why do you persist in the acquisition of such objects of ambition when you know that they are not the chief things which the Deity has appointed for the welfare of mankind? Where is the evidence in you of that love, equality, humility, which claim to be the foundation of Christianity? Your deportment as princes separates you from your fellow-men. Does it not resemble a fraud committed against that religion of which you are the chiefs and leaders? And are not those fundamental truths violated in you? Do you, or do you not, by your position and conduct, by your acts and proceedings, give a direct contradiction to the instruction taught by Christ and his Apostles whom ye profess to follow? Be not deceived. The Church you rule over will rapidly lose ground unless you surrender once and for ever the many false principles which,

though handed down to you and which you have inherited, are nevertheless offensive to the will of the Deity, and therefore inimical to the best interests and welfare of mankind.

Well may Bishops, Canons, Statesmen, and others declare that the poverty of the poor and the riches of the rich grow greater and greater each day, and that ill-will, jealousy, and antagonism exist between classes to such an extent that the safety of society is threatened. Singularly enough, while this is admitted, the Church laughs to scorn all attempts at amelioration unless they originate within its own body. It has had the guidance of society ever since the commencement of the Christian era; and though it is heartily dissatisfied with the results of its instruction, yet it declares that there is no other way possible to regenerate society but by the Church, namely, the very means which has so remarkably failed. And this persistence of the Church in a false idea is unfortunately, to a certain degree, though it diminishes daily, shared by the laity. These have been so indoctrinated with certain dogmas that they with difficulty recognise any truths which tend to subvert or destroy the latter.

An irrational fear of God is one pernicious result of the instruction of the age. There is nothing to fear from so good and perfect a Being as our Creator. A

perfect Being like God is lovely in every aspect of His character, and there is every reason why we should come as nigh to Him as we can, and that on all occasions. Whatever we are about, if we can mingle the thought of God in it so much lighter will be our work. We gain strength spiritually as we think upon Him. There is every reason therefore that we should have recourse to Him at all times. Our spirits require refreshment, but when they are alienated from Him it is like being shut out from all light and heat.

If we are admonished to fear God the effect is to make us shun Him altogether, whereas the contrary should be our delight. We should love Him continually, and as a consequence of this love, study His law and follow it.

When we have familiarised ourselves more and more with the character of our Maker, and when we see the beauty and perfection of His laws, we shall not be alarmed at the prospect of quitting this life, but rather shall we feel death to be the dispensation of an Almighty Friend, whose purposes and plans we have learnt to admire, and for whose love we have waited patiently.

If an object which concerns us to know is held up to us as something dreadful, it naturally becomes repulsive to the mind. Whereas the contrary should

be the study of our teachers. So dreadful is the contemplation of our Maker become, so marvellous and fearful His dispensations as misrepresented to us, that it is with increasing impatience we consent to hear a lecture from the pulpit about Him. This is not as it should be. From childhood to old age that Fountain of all goodness, purity, truth, and perfection is made to occupy in our minds such unpleasant memories that we fear to lengthen out our thoughts of Him; and yet where is there a better and more glorious and more profitable contemplation and study than that of our Maker, and of all His wonderful rules and works? The study of these should be the delight of our lives. Then alone all the phenomena of our existence would become understood and valued, and the end of existence here would not be stigmatised as the fruit of sin, but would be recognised as the consummation of this our state of preparation: a consummation full of rejoicing and of hope to them who have understood and obeyed the rules of our Maker.

Another mistaken idea implanted by erroneous teaching is the notion of devoting one particular day in the seven to spiritual purposes. This is plainly seen when we consider the injustice done to the spirit by the exercise of such a rule. The nourishment which the spirit requires in order to keep it in a

proper state of intercourse with the Father of spirits, is a daily, nay, almost an hourly necessity. What would be said of a proposition to nourish the body with food once a week, and let it take its chance during the rest of that time as to what it received in the shape of food. Such an idea would be thought too preposterous to be entertained for a moment, and yet the appointment of one day in seven for the special consideration of spiritual matters has practically the effect of starving the soul altogether. The man who neglects spiritual things for six days in the week is quite unable to comprehend on the seventh what is required to sustain his soul in health. It is partly owing to this that there is so little of vital religion. The forms of religious service are gone through on the Sabbath, but the reality of a religious life is neither understood nor appreciated. The setting apart one day is an institution which permits people to deceive themselves. They comply with a form while they fail to take hold of a great Reality, namely, a true conception of a spiritual existence. This existence should be known as a present and an actual existence. It is not one which is to follow this life—it is not one which is in any way to succeed this, or to which we may or may not become entitled; but it is one which we actually have at present, but which, according to the treatment

which the soul receives, is either a highly moral and intellectual, or a low degraded and animal life.

Nothing short of the total abolition of the Sabbath becomes necessary. There is no particular degree of sacredness in this day over another. It is simply a portion of time in all respects like any other equal portion of a week. To hold it in any way as more sacred is but to divert the attention from the point where all our attention is needed. The improvement, nay, the sanctification of the human soul should be the one absorbing thought in each. That result can only be brought about by daily preparation of the spirit that is in us. The cultivation of that inner life should occupy, not one day in the week, but every day. The abolition of the Sabbath and the employment of some of its hours in ordinary labour should enable employers to reduce the hours of work for the working man, so as to afford him the opportunity for daily cultivation of his spiritual life. For instance, instead of his working for fifty or sixty hours during six days, let him spread the same number of hours over seven days inclusive of the Sabbath. As a consequence, there would be less hardship and disease, and more daily opportunity for the working man to seek his improvement. He will have to work perhaps seven or eight hours a day instead of nine or ten. He would not be

so tired of an evening as not to be able to read, and therefore he would devote an hour or two each evening to intellectual improvement, improvement so much needed to lift the working classes from a condition of difficulty to one of comparative contentment. As to the day of rest itself, such a day is quite unnecessary. The night is the proper time for rest: appointed by the Maker as the proper season of repose, it is ample. If the hours of labour were fewer, the character of the work would not only be superior, but the fatigue of the day to the labourer would be much less; and by intelligent arrangement he would become, instead of a mere beast of burden, a citizen contented and happy, one of millions inhabiting a prosperous kingdom. It is a thousand times more important to keep ourselves holy than to keep holy the Sabbath; to preserve the personal righteousness of immortal beings than the sanctity of a portion of Time.

The day of judgment is another of the fallacies under which we labour. We are instructed that a great trial awaits us after death, the time appointed being the end of the world, when all who have ever lived will rise from their graves to receive sentence according to their merits or demerits. This postponement of so solemn a procedure has the worst conse-

quences. It prevents the acquisition by us of the knowledge of the real facts which concern us so deeply.

The day of judgment is always present. It is the actual, the passing day of our lives. We are being hourly tried according as we conduct ourselves. According as we observe, neglect, or defy the laws of our Maker, physical and moral, so are we judged. We suffer instant injury to ourselves if we break any of His rules made for our well-being. For all this it is without doubt true that according as we are fit for employment in our future spiritual life, so shall we be employed. It is of the highest importance to us all to cultivate spiritual qualities, so that we may appropriately fill the position which our Maker intends for us in the purely spiritual condition which awaits us, and to which we should look forward with alacrity.

Some people believe in the personal existence of a Devil. They imagine that bad ideas which arise in their minds are the suggestions of the Evil One, and they consequently say he is frequently at their side. But a little consideration would teach them that all ideas which make their appearance in their minds, and which arrest their attention, are simply the products of their own faculties. These faculties are various. One class of them belong to and are prompted

by the body, and another class belong to the mind or soul; and according as we employ or, in other words, cultivate these faculties, so are the suggestions which appear. All ideas are the fruit of this cultivation or development. When, therefore, we are tormented by evil thoughts, we may be sure that we have not been cultivating good but evil things, and that we have only ourselves to blame for our discomfort.

To free ourselves altogether from such unhappy and altogether unprofitable thoughts there is but one way, and that is to keep well under control all our sensual desires,—gluttony, intemperance, extravagance, lust, pride. For when these and others like them have obtained the mastery over us, then indeed we are filled with all manner of evil thoughts and desires; but when we have got them well under the guidance of our moral faculties, they no longer militate against our comfort. Our business is to see that we are actively pursuing some good and moral object, for as surely as we neglect to pursue that which is good, evil steps in. There is no such thing as a vacuum in morals any more than in physics.

When people have not learned a sound basis of truth, but are believing in such unrealities as divine resentment, devils, eternal punishments, and periodical spiritual culture, their reasoning faculties become de-

ranged. The instrument intended to guide them through life goes out of order, and imagination usurps the place of reason. They are carried away by many a vague, idle fancy, which too frequently leads the way to their eternal ruin.

It is not thus when we are possessed of real knowledge. We then discipline ourselves according to its provisions, and our minds are not disposed to run into wild, extravagant, pernicious, delusive ways. Having built upon a sound basis, the whole structure of our lives is sound. If ever, because of the many artificial and unreal things around, we are induced to wander in our thoughts, these are soon brought back to order and harmony when we remember the eternal principles which we have recognised as the guides of life.

No authority is necessary to explain truths so simple. Each one must learn the laws for himself, as each person learns the route he has to take to reach his home. It is a great and unnecessary waste to have a priesthood, whether Catholic, Protestant, or Comtist, of some myriads, to inculcate doctrines based upon art non-natural and misleading. The way most conducive to our good is to have no interference between us and our Maker. If we obtain a clear idea of His existence and of His perfections, that, with a knowledge of His laws, is all we need. We cannot

help being penetrated by His attributes, and becoming like Him. If we perceive Him, we shall derive some of the traits of His great character. It is against our own improvement to have others continually thinking and acting for us, when the object of our Maker is our individual improvement; and this improvement can only be properly effected by the employment of our own minds and spirits.

The attractions of Christianity, what are they? The charm is certainly not intellectual. It is not supported by reason, and therefore it takes shelter in miracles and mystery. Here is at once its weakness and its strength. A person who has a real knowledge of the Maker's ways, perceives in Christianity a structure of artifice, with a foundation as unreal as the superstructure. He sees the whole mass melting before the light of truth as it rises above the horizon. A religion which cannot harmonise with reason must give way in proportion as people become enlightened, and unless it is supported by force it will only be found in the abodes of the ignorant and superstitious. But that which is right and reasonable will increase from day to day among all nations and peoples, until it spreads itself over the whole of the habitable world. Its influence, like that of heat, will be felt everywhere; for, like heat, it possesses a force in itself which, as

soon as it is placed within the human mind, will be appreciated as it deserves.

Mankind have never stood in need of a Revelation. To assert that they ever did is to imply that our Maker's design in respect to man was short-sighted, and that His work was unfinished and incomplete in its character, and that it failed in its aim. This is really what the sum of the judgment of men amounts to who advance the idea of a revelation in treating of this very great subject. This is how they endeavour to shelve the ever-living, most active, and most perfect plans of the all-perfect and almighty Being, while they support schemes of men.

But the plans of the Eternal will not be disposed of in this or any other than His own way. Though His patience is equal to His goodness, yet He will have all darkness to vanish and the light appear. Christianity has certainly shed a light on our path; but Christianity on the whole is an institution not altogether good in its character. It is of mixed benefit. It is too narrow in its aims. Its pretensions to displace the normal views of the Deity, with the object of establishing a universal sovereignty, is and ever will be rejected by the majority of mankind. Other systems claim equal authority from God. Others assert a divine origin. Moses claimed to have seen and talked with God, and

the Jews to this day maintain the commandments as they came from Him. The Brahmins have revelations of their own, and tell of the incarnation of their deities. Other nations make similar statements in support of schemes which their best men from time to time have thought proper to promulgate for the well-being of the community; and however grotesque the character of these schemes appear to us, yet we may assume that they all, wherever accepted, worked good in proportion to the good principles which they contained.

Therefore to say that the Christian religion is the only true one is as much as to assert that the Deity, in His relations with mankind for the many ages before the Christian era, was guilty of one continuous blunder; that He created man and left him without a light to guide him on his journey; and that only with the coming of Christ did the light of morality and truth first appear. Such argument do those maintain who think that Christianity is the only true religion. They omit to remember the fact that the Almighty's character for perfection is in question. They overlook the certainty that the great Maker, when He made man, made also laws for his support and improvement and well-being. These laws, whether we see them or not, have their force to this very day. He is con-

tinually calling on us to understand them. He requires us to consider our ways. He demands of us to observe all that is going on around us. His work in what we call Nature lies open before us, and if we will not read it so much the worse for us. He has endowed us with faculties sufficient to perceive His will in these laws. He requires us to make use of all the faculties with which He has endowed us, so that we may examine and reflect upon all the various phenomena before us in the grand and beautiful universe which He has made, as well as in ourselves, in others, and in our relations with them. And from all this we may be sure we shall derive light sufficient to guide us in the knowledge of His laws and to the attainment of our good. In proportion as we are obedient to His will He blesses our efforts. Christianity, it is true, partly teaches us His will, and so far does good; but to affirm that Christianity is in any way sufficient to guide us through life is a great error. It is not His will pure and simple, but chiefly a human scheme, containing much that is everlasting truth, mingled with much that is perishable error. Hence the unsatisfactory condition of the Christian world at this very time. Where is the Christian who is satisfied with the state of things around him? Even in the bosom of his own family there is not that

peace and quiet, that open fulness, that joy, that improvement which should ever be progressive and ever looking upward. The pauperism and misery of the poor, the pride and envy among the rich, the strikes and divisions among classes, the strife among the churches, to say nothing of that greatest iniquity of all—war among nations—all these things attest in a most unmistakeable manner the insufficiency of Christianity as a means to attain or promote happiness. The misery and misfortune of mankind proceed from their neglect of the true study of our Maker's original plan, and Christianity is to blame for drawing our attention away to the imperfect system which it promulgates. And if we examine the motives alleged to have moved God to interfere in so extraordinary a manner as it describes on behalf of mankind, we find them equally unsatisfactory. It is declared that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." And again we are told that God's hatred of sin was so great that nothing short of the sacrifice of his Son could atone for the sins of a guilty world. Now whatever the amount of the love of God be towards men, His love for justice as an active principle must be far greater and infinitely more important. If He were so weak as to sacrifice

an innocent person, there would from that moment be established a confusion in the mind of the Almighty, which would suffice to overthrow the whole system of the universe. The glorious perfection of His nature would be imperilled. Such an idea of Him cannot for a moment be entertained.

The idea of those who point to this as an instance of God's love to mankind is easy to understand. It is evidently an appeal to our sympathies. God loved you so much that He sacrificed his Son for you. Ought you not to love Him for so great a gift as his well-beloved Son? Unquestionably the appeal thus put has aroused and established in many a bosom a durable sympathy. It has awakened in many quarters a new relationship with God, where, perhaps, no previous connection existed. But for all this it is an appeal to the lower faculties of our nature. It may cause us to lead better lives for a time, and, indeed, throughout life, if we happen to be free from any particular trials and difficulties; but such instruction is not calculated to lift us up from a low to a higher state of existence. It is only through our reason and our observation, the higher faculties which belong to us, that we can hope to achieve all that is destined for man. It is only when that reason has been properly brought into exercise that we shall ascertain all that

God designs for us. It is only by the operation of our mind and spirit that we can be obedient to His will.

There can be no doubt that mankind have received peculiar faculties from their Maker, by which they are capable of rendering a complete obedience to His will, and of pursuing the end for which the Almighty designed them. With these facts before us there is no room for the suppositions raised by the advocates of a new revelation, that the faculties of mankind are too imperfect; that their situation is too unfortunate, or that they were suffering under the loss of some prior revelation; that they wanted knowledge of the design of God in relation to their present and future state; and that it was not likely without the aid of a new revelation to attain it. Under these circumstances it is asked, why is it improbable that a revelation should be made?

Now while I submit that there was no occasion for a revelation at all, the mind of God being constantly apparent in His works, the statement that miracles sustained the authority of the revelation is equally untenable and unsatisfactory. I say that as the Almighty's will is promulgated throughout the world in a wonderfully clear way, and men are bound to obey it, in like manner if He ever designed to alter

that will, He would give an equally wide circulation to that alteration. It is quite insufficient, therefore, of Him to publish a new decree of any nature, though supported by a score of miracles performed in a remote corner of the earth, and require me and others to put faith in it. Such is not my idea of that great, intelligent, just, and good Being who rules the universe. Had it ever entered His mind to change any of His plans in respect to man, He would have given universal evidence of such intention—evidence which would not depend upon any local human testimony whatever.

But there never has been reason for any alteration in the divine plan. It is as good and perfect now as it ever was. Thousands of ages will yet pass by, but not the slightest flaw will be found in it. It is the work of the All-perfect, and the stamp of the seal of perfection is on it. The principles which produce good and evil are always the same—they stand fast and for ever; it is for man as an intelligent creature to choose which he will.

Nor is it by any alleged promises of God that we obtain happiness, or advance the welfare of our race. It is not by the belief in a mediator, or even by belief in God himself, that we reach such a consummation; but it is by obediently following His laws, by placing

ourselves in harmony with His views. As we obtain fruit of our fields by ploughing and cultivation, in like manner, by the preparation of our minds and our bodies, we advance our moral and our material interests. I believe there is an amount of wealth at the Bank of England; I should like to possess some of it; but the only way in which I can get any, is by following some legitimate occupation; I must work in some way, and make profit as others have done. I see a field rich in wheat, and I learn without surprise that by ploughing, and otherwise following the laws of cultivation, the farmer is blessed with his crop. It is work, then, which is necessary to clothe the ground with fatness, and to prevent the growth of weeds; and it is also work of its appropriate kind which is necessary to advance our physical and moral nature. If we think that health of body, immunity from disease, and freedom from error and crime, are to be found without any care or pain, we shall be very much mistaken. No reliance on physicians or mediators will suffice.

There can be no doubt that the founder of Christianity, and those who joined him in the undertaking, zealously and industriously exerted themselves with the view to establish a religion of greater purity than that to which they had belonged. They were dis-

satisfied with the hypocrisy prevailing among their brethren, the Jews. Men of a sincere and abiding faith in God, simple in their manners and life, they possessed excellent rules of life and conduct compared with those in the midst of whom they lived. They were men who had all the zeal and energy of reformers. Their convictions were so firm and deep-rooted as to the truthfulness of their tenets, that they were prepared to risk their lives rather than forsake their principles. Their minds were so fully made up with respect to the soundness of their religious faith, that they would rather be racked, tortured, and destroyed than give it up. Yet there is nothing surprising in all this. Similar phenomena occur in the subjects of many other religious communities besides Christianity. Mark the great difference between the Jewish observances and the practice of the Christian reformers. The Jews depended upon the many ceremonies enjoined on them of washing and sacrifices under the Levitical law, whereas the Christians discovered and truthfully proclaimed that the effect of these formalities was to establish hypocrisy. This it was that they wished to root up; and in its place they resolved to establish a system which would produce a greater purity of life. Nothing is more beautiful and commendable than this; nothing is more natural than

the consequences. The general condition of society was corrupt. A band of men simple, loving, industrious, possessed of some great and everlasting principles, determined to spread them abroad for the love of God and of their fellow-creatures. The orthodox priesthood of the time were against them, and crucified the founder of the school, and persecuted his followers, just as the orthodox priesthood of our time would be against any reformers now, and would, it may be feared, persecute and destroy them if they had the power. The removal of their head, the founder of their faith, in so barbarous a manner, served but to heighten their devotion to their master, and their zeal for their work. He at once became in their estimation a martyred saint, and the work which they had begun became more precious to them, and was carried on with affectionate enthusiasm. It needed no miracles to establish the truths which the disciples taught, for the principles under which they acted, and in which they lived, themselves possessed a power which affected their whole lives and conduct to such a degree, that it was a common remark among the heathen, "See how these Christians love one another."

Nor is it at all likely that the founder or his disciples ever gave currency to any account of a miracle. It is more than probable that the statements concerning

miracles were inserted by the historians of the Gospels —or by some person who for theological and political purposes felt it more advantageous to the Church, seeing the immense struggle in which it was engaged in the first century after the death of its founder, to claim for it a supernatural foundation. Hence we see Christianity holding out its hand to Judaism on the one side and Paganism on the other. The Jewish sacrifices were abolished and swallowed up in the one great sacrifice of Christ, while some of the minor observances were retained. To propitiate Paganism, Jesus Christ, round whose character so much that is pure and good centred, was deified.

It was quite a common thing to interlard all Jewish writings with statements of miracles. They gave additional interest, force, and effect to the history, and in the eyes of a superstitious public doubtless such relations added weight to the accounts themselves. The ignorant mind is not easily aroused to attention. To obtain certain effects it is necessary to exaggerate the facts. The mental vision of the multitude is so dull that it is necessary to heighten the colours of the picture which you present to their understanding.

But, though these devices were resorted to in those days, why should the world at this time be called upon to believe in miracles past, present, or future? I

cannot think it possible that a Being of perfect justice can expect me to believe statements of transactions which the Jewish people, in whose city they were alleged to have occurred, themselves rejected at the very time they were reported to have happened. To assert that the course of the ordinary rules by which the Maker works is arrested, in an apartment where some followers of Christ were present, proves nothing at all to the world beyond that circle. It only serves to raise our doubts of the integrity of the whole transaction. For shall we prefer the testimony of partizans on matters of such importance before our daily experience of the operations of our own Maker? The working of miracles is altogether a human idea. God never contradicts himself. His ways are unchangeable. He would no more think of restoring a decomposed body to life than He would arrest the course of the shadow on the sun-dial. And yet a similar credulity suggested the miracle as regards the sun-dial of Ahaz. There is about as much truth in the one as in the other. Miracles are not necessary to forward the designs of God. They are the very things to puzzle and delude us as to His ways. The principles on which He has established the happiness of man are fixed and unerring. They have a clearness about them which requires no supplementary revelation to confirm or establish. To

attempt to prop them up with any statement based on miraculous interpositions, is as unmeaning as it would be vain.

The introduction of miracles into the new Revelation is perhaps best accounted for as being an imitation of the manner in which the teachers of the period instructed the schools of the period which they followed. Abstract truth was unknown; scientific thought and study equally so. Hyperbolical statements abounded. Even Jesus Christ is made to use such language. "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out; for it is better for thee to lose an eye than to perish in hell-fire." The Psalms also contain similar hyperbole, and the same may in fact be said of the whole of the Old Testament. All this shows that the Jews were accustomed before and after the appearance of Christ to deal with language in this manner. Indeed, we may not be surprised at this when we reflect upon the fact that it is difficult truthfully, that is with exactness, to delineate any complex incident. Besides, it was more perplexing to explain then, than it is now, how to avoid evil and to follow good. Every device of fear, superstition, or miracle, was resorted to, to persuade the mind. We at this day and place see through the contrivance because our age is more critical. We require explanation of a more appropriate

character before we can entertain facts in support of any proposition. It is not so in all parts of Europe. It was not so at the period of Christ. The ignorant mind of that day required to be aroused in a manner now inconceivably absurd to us, but doubtless necessary then. To illustrate the working of our Maker in any respect as regards ourselves or the things around us we shall find that the simplest language will suffice, because all His dealings are simplicity itself. There is a rule which sufficiently accounts for miracles. Whatever idea the mind receives, that it generates or reproduces. Where a people believe in things unreal, they will be ready to support unrealities. Accustomed to grow in the soil of their minds, it is no wonder if they flower there from time to time. The declaration by some person more imaginative than the rest that a supernatural event has occurred does not alarm nor take them by surprise ; they faithfully believe it.

In determining the value of the gospel plan, it is necessary to consider the degree of credibility to be attached to the statements on which it is supported. And first we should remark that the age in which the events are said to have occurred was one of the greatest immorality and vice. If the most eminent men in a nation were capable of doing such great injustice, committing such great crimes, as we find

recorded of those times, what a depth of ignorance must not the land have been under! And it is natural where there is great ignorance, there will be found great credulity. Jesus Christ appeared among the Jews as a great reformer. He protested against the hypocrisy of the age, and preached purity of life. His Sermon on the Mount contains, for the most part, excellent, useful, and practical philosophy. But by the side of this instruction is found other utterances and doctrine of a very different character. The hypocrisy which Christ denounced, plainly showed that the Jewish teaching of his day was corrupt. Many disbelieved in it. The faith in Moses was breaking up when the great Protestant Teacher appeared. He discerned the difference between real and false teaching. He set them forth with great power. But, unhappily, his followers did not thoroughly understand him.

Opinions concerning Christ from the very commencement of Christianity were exceedingly various and shrouded in mystery. The Ebionites, the people of Nazareth, the place where Christ was born, thought he was a man and nothing more. Other people believed that he was a man in appearance only, whatever that meant. Others again called him the logos, by which they meant an emanation from the Supreme Being, in

fact, the Spirit of God Himself—that Spirit which created the universe. Some again maintained that Joseph was his natural father, others that he was begotten by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin. Some considered him the Christ who was expected by the Jews. These, again, have at all times declared that the Christ they have long looked for, and yet expect, will be a man.

As time advanced, the simple belief of his countrymen in his manhood assumed the mysterious doctrine of the third person of the Trinity.

The Christian philosophers and adherents of the first two centuries, finding great difficulty in recommending a religion whose founder met so violent a death as that of the cross, contrived to reconcile it to the Greeks and other Gentile communities by exalting him to the rank of a Deity.

Opinions, however, continued to be very strongly divided. The early Christian Church regarded his divinity with great distrust. This was followed by the famous Arian controversy in the reign of Constantine. It was to settle this grand division in the Church that the Council of Nice was held. And, after much violent language had been employed at that council, it decided against Arius, and thenceforth became established the doctrine of the Trinity. It was

not, however, until long after that the Arians were defeated in their views.

As we know the history of the origin, rise, and progress of Christianity, we may safely assert it to be a human institution. Man saw the beginning and man will see the end of it. Based upon an erroneous belief, contrary to the declaration of Christ himself, who said there is but one God, it would long since have come to an end were it not for the stringent rules imposed upon its members, and the strong oaths which bind its priesthood. Happily the days of coercion and restraint are over. The worst description of slavery over the human mind is rapidly passing away. Man is at length permitted to place his trust and his confidence where alone it is due, namely, in his Maker. Man may love and be obedient to the will of his Maker without that love and fealty being intercepted by another, without the danger of his fellow-man calling him to an account for such a liberty. The rules of our Maker, under which we live, rules which should be the guide of our life, are coeval with Himself. Like Him they never had a beginning, and therefore are everlasting. We cannot conceive of a time when these principles were not in existence.

Paley, in his "Evidences of Christianity," asserts that the question of which he treats lies between

Christianity and no religion. This is certainly narrowing the discussion very much, but it is at the expense of truth.

Our Maker's scheme for the well-being of his creatures commenced with the day they were created; and if man has not understood his Maker 'tis not His fault. He is exceedingly plain in all His ways. He has given us a spirit, but if we do not cultivate that spirit how can we comprehend His work? We cannot follow Him if we are absorbed by the bodily part of our natures. We place the comforts and pleasures of the body before the higher enjoyments of the mind. We make the body the master and leader, and let the soul drag behind. We fatten the body, but let the mind starve, and then, forsooth, we declare that our Maker never revealed His ways to us, and a revelation, founded on error, is placed before us, to which, however grotesque in its appointment, our concurrence and belief in it is demanded.

If our Maker desired the promulgation of a new revelation, presuming the old has been lost or ineffective, He would have made one which would be accepted by all nations, whereas the Christian revelation makes no impression on Jews, Hindoos, Moslems, Buddhists, who all pretend to have revelations of their own.

Paley also requires our attention to two propositions, framed in these words:—

1. "That there is satisfactory evidence that many professing to be original witnesses of the Christian miracles, passed their lives in labours, dangers, and sufferings, voluntarily undergone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief of those accounts; and that they also submitted, from the same motives, to new rules of conduct."

2. "That there is not satisfactory evidence that persons professing to be original witnesses of other miracles in their nature as certain as these are, have ever acted in the same manner in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and properly in consequence of their belief of those accounts."

In thus challenging a comparison, and seemingly resting the whole case on it, he surely overlooks the Biblical history of the Jews. There we behold a wonderful resemblance to the new revelation. But instead of a man, God—God himself appears on Mount Horeb. Moses talks with him at one time, having Aaron with him; at another, seventy elders of the people. A revelation of His will is handed to them in the tables of stone. Numerous miracles are performed. The Jews are governed under that will.

They form new rules of conduct for themselves and their children. They were as zealous in their way of performance as were the Christians under the revelation to them. The faith of the Jews was so firm that it knew no restraint. They did not hesitate to stone to death those found breaking the Sabbath, as well as those guilty of cursing God, &c. They underwent great suffering, hunger, and starvation in the wilderness. Passed forty years in wandering about, having no houses to rest in; and having fought an extraordinary number of battles, they finally conquered for themselves and obtained the land of Canaan, the promised land, where their comparative comfort was so great that it was described as a land flowing with milk and honey.

Surely in this rapid sketch of the history of the Jews there is ample evidence of miracles performed by the Jewish leaders; abundant proof of the dangers and difficulties they underwent in support of the accounts and promises which they believed; also that they submitted to new rules of conduct.

To be sure, the Christian miracles were a great deal more modest in their character. Water was made wine at a feast. Thousands were miraculously fed on a few loaves and fishes. A few persons were quietly raised from the dead. All these performances were

purely local in their character. They were chiefly performed in the midst of Christians, so that the outer world could have no means of forming a judgment upon them. Very different would the evidence stand of the changing the water into wine if, for instance, the fiat had gone forth that all water used at wedding feasts throughout the world that morning should be transformed into wine. Numerous nations would then, in all parts of the globe, have witnessed a most remarkable phenomenon. Their historians would take note of it, and the fact would have been handed down to us. The veracity of the transaction would be as well established as that of a remarkable eclipse. Pliny, to say nothing of contemporary writers, would have caught at the facts, and recorded them, if they had been heard of, with as much satisfaction as he has related the incidents touching the eruption of Vesuvius and the burial of Pompeii in the year 79 of the Christian era. But no; these great events, these wonderful miracles, worked to attest the fact of a new revelation, are unfolded in quiet corners of Judea; and we, though at this distance of time, at the peril of our lives, are threatened with eternal punishment unless we accept the accounts as true.

The Jewish miracles were conducted on a larger scale. We read, for example, that when the frogs

were commanded to appear they did so *throughout all the land of Egypt.*

Perhaps the boldness of the statements of the Jewish writer could not be controverted by any one, seeing that at the time they were issued the Egyptian nation had been swept away. On a comparison of the two propositions I think there will be found a close analogy between them. The picture of the Jewish miracles is if anything grander than anything the Christians can produce. It is far more astonishing to bring into existence millions of frogs than to restore a dead man to life, or to alter the flavour of a few firkins of water. Then the labour, danger, and sufferings of the children of Israel during forty years in the desert were no small matters. Without food, without water, in the midst of an enemy's country, amid combats innumerable, the trials and sufferings they voluntarily underwent in consequence of their belief in a Divine interposition, was beyond doubt equal to, if not greater than, anything which the Christian disciples and missionaries have borne or been exposed to.

But though the parallel is fully established, though there is abundant evidence that persons, other than Christians, professing to be original witnesses of other miracles, in their nature as certain as the Christian miracles are, have acted in the same matter in attesta-

tion of the accounts which they delivered, and properly, in consequence of their belief in those accounts, yet it does not follow that either of these schemes, whether Jewish or Christian, is Divine. They are neither of them entitled to this character, for both of them are human and nothing more.

The Founder of Christianity was unquestionably a very uncommon person. He inherited from his parents many rare gifts, of which he showed proofs at a very early age. Among his powers stood foremost the quality of sincerity. He was a man of great observation and earnest piety. His advice on physical as well as on moral things was doubtless very valuable and much sought. Perceiving the corruption abounding in society, he determined to stem the foul torrent. The time was ripe for such an enterprise. The hypocrisy of his brethren, the Jews, on the one hand, the dissipation of the Romans on the other, cried aloud for a reformation. Several teachers of morality arose at this time, and among them John the Baptist. But the teaching of all was unquestionably surpassed by that of Jesus Christ. His beautiful Sermon on the Mount is happily preserved to us, and from it we may judge of the character of the man who uttered it. He soon became the chief leader of the greatest reformation which the world has yet

witnessed. He set in motion certain principles which his penetrating mind foresaw would work most important and beneficial effects. From that moment light began to show in the darkest places of the earth; purity and peace where there was wretchedness and misery. Others of his countrymen, looking on at the happy effects, embraced his doctrines, enthusiastically followed in his train, and became his disciples. A band of far-seeing, thoughtful, earnest men were soon found resolved to pursue one chief purpose, the regeneration of society, or, as they termed it, the extension of the kingdom of heaven. Dispersing themselves, they set about teaching the people all around. They subsisted for the most part upon the charity which was doled out to them, either in the streets or in the houses into which, by their more liberal and sympathising hearers, they might be invited to enter. In less than a generation by this means a profession arose and was soon established. And as the number of teachers increased, and their doctrines sometimes varied and clashed, threatening even to become unsound and heretical, it was necessary to establish order and authority amongst them. Hence the appointment of officers in what now had become the Christian Church.

It is remarkable with what a degree of earnestness and zeal in any adventure men will devote themselves,

provided the pioneers are of the right sort or mettle. The follower is inspired by the spirit of his leader. Soldiers in a worthless cause, as well as sailors in desperate ventures, often evince surprising fortitude, and, if they are well disciplined, never shrink even from death. If military culture produce such results, how much greater will be the fortitude of men of spiritual discipline!

Convinced, as these men were, of the righteousness of the work in which they had embarked, it is not to be wondered at that they adhered to it through every trial. When heaven is promised to the martyr, life is held at a very small value. If the Hindoo suttee gave herself up to be burned on the funeral pile of her deceased husband in the belief that she was performing a duty required by her religion, why should it be surprising to hear that death to the Christian brought neither shrinking nor alarm? Nourished by a bright faith with hopes of heaven and immortality, he ought to look with complacency on all the sufferings to which he might be subject, assured that in death he was exchanging his poor form of existence on earth for one of glory in another and a better world.

It should be remembered that the first serious account of the persecution of Christians dates from a period some thirty years after the death of Christ.

Hence Christianity had been established for a period of about forty years, which in the East is equivalent to two entire generations. It is a fact that during the whole of that time so ardent was the zeal of its missionaries that the conversion, especially of the heathen to Christianity, spread far and wide, and their success extended to distant dominions of the Roman Empire, while in Rome itself large numbers of the converts dwelt. The religion had taken root. Nothing was therefore more natural than that when the Christians were visited by persecution many, supporting the consistency of their character and profession, would prefer martyrdom to an escape from that fate by adopting the worship of idolatry. Similar tenacity to creed would obtain in many other very different forms of religion.

Granting, then, that there is abundant evidence of labour, unflagging zeal, affliction, and persecution, crowned occasionally with death, all this does not substantiate the truth of miracles, or the statement that there was a new revelation. I rather incline to the belief that the phenomena of persecution goes to prove the presence of some serious imperfection in the martyrs themselves. Why should any human being injure a really perfect man? Take the case of the Founder of Christianity himself. Why was he cru-

cified? What was the immediate cause of so violent an act? His denunciations of the Scribes and Pharisees made them his enemies. His exclusiveness made him shunned. If, instead of censuring their faults, he had shown them how evil and good were produced, perhaps matters would have taken a different shape. But certainly the sweeping way he went to work made him lose all influence over the majority of the Jews, his brethren, to whom it was alleged he had been especially sent. You do not open the eyes of the blind by the administration of a kick. If you judged rightly you should rather compassionate with them, and lead them gently on their journey. In like manner, those from whom we may differ should be dealt with considerately. We should take an affectionate interest in them, show them our reasons for proceeding as we do, not upbraid them for their prejudices. People born and brought up in a certain way of thinking cannot suddenly see the evil of that way. As custom and familiarity with the most ugly features make us overcome any disgust, in like manner we do not perceive the heinousness of crimes of which we may be habitually guilty. By denouncing the weak and the erring in strong language, we but lengthen the distance which separates them from us. Instead of attracting them, we drive them from us. Instead of

inviting their understandings, we completely stop their ears and shut their eyes; and the bitterness of our language serves to furnish them with a fresh reason for dislike of us, and adds strength to their persistence in their views, however erroneous. Who would think of abusing an ignorant farmer because his crops of wheat were poor, and we desired to improve them? Would it be wise to curse and to swear at him, or would it not rather be better gently to convince him of the error of his ways, and show him something better?

There is such a thing as hurting a patient without curing him. Missionaries frequently use their tongues in a manner sufficient to set their audience in anger against them, when their errands should ever abound in love; and they wonder at the end of their lives that no one believed in their report, and that, instead of receiving the Gospel with rejoicing and thankfulness, their hearers commonly shunned, if they did not injure and persecute them.

The evidence of heathen writers and philosophers who lived shortly after the death of Christ, respecting Christianity, has a very important bearing on the subject, for it shows the estimation in which that religion was held by them. The first thought which strikes an impartial reader of Tacitus, Pliny, and others, is the total absence of any veneration for the religion. It is

branded by them as a gross superstition; and though some of its followers are described by them as distinguished men, yet they saw no beauty in it. And as to the miracles said to have been performed, and the Divine character of the Founder of the religion, not a word of reference to these wonderful circumstances exists. Is it probable that such great transactions could have occurred in a part of the Roman Empire presided over by intelligent governors and magistrates, men in correspondence with the emperors and authors of the period, and yet that none of these men should know anything about them? The idea of "the Son of God" visiting the earth on a mission which he was appointed to fulfil, and performing miracles in proof of his divinity, whilst neither the Jews, to whom he was especially sent, received him, nor did the Romans, who happened to be the rulers of the province where he appeared and dwelt, and where the miracles were performed, and where, under a Roman governor he was crucified, know anything of these great matters, is incredible. And yet these transactions, if emanating from the Almighty, were the greatest which ever occurred on the face of the earth. Pliny gives a circumstantial account of the burial of Pompeii by the eruption of Vesuvius in the year 79. Besides him other men of observation were to be found in all parts

of the Roman Empire, and nothing would have been easier than to record the occurrence of such events had they taken place. Society was known to be in a very corrupt state. Philosophers, satirists, and other public writers, made no small stir about its depravity. If ever there was a time when a Professor of Morality was needed, the age was then ripe for him; and yet when one appears, armed with Divine strength, his accents are unheard, and his presence, as a Divine Being, unknown. A light more glorious than the sun itself, if we are to believe all that we are told, appears amidst the darkness, and yet men most capable of judging of the requirements of their country fail to see the phenomenon, and omit to recognise its rays. This absence of all adverse testimony as to the Christian miracles, and with respect to the Divinity of the Founder of Christianity, is a remakable drawback to the credibility of that faith. Men of independent character and of ability may fairly be excused from believing it.

But though the Roman and Jewish writers are not forthcoming to confirm these great events, that which the rulers and writers heard concerning Christianity was sufficient in their minds to make them regard the adherents of that religion with utter indifference, if not with contempt. And it is perhaps owing to this

indifference as much as to any other cause, that the spread of the religion is, in the first instance, attributable; for in the earliest years after the Founder's death there was no serious impediment offered to its promulgation. The disciples had wandered about in heathen lands, where the seeds of their doctrine took root permanently, when Nero, about thirty years later, commenced his cruel slaughter. Then followed a considerable lull. The community had time to increase. It was only about seventy years after the Founder's death that the Roman governors seem to have become jealous of the position of the Christians. Up to that time there had been no settled policy against the sect. Not being considered worthy of attention, they had been suffered to spread; but now that their numbers had so much increased, and they had frequently become the subjects of accusation, Pliny sought instructions from his superiors at Rome respecting their treatment. He described them as obstinately addicted to a gross superstition. Trajan refers to them as belonging to "a bad and excessive superstition." Suetonius styles them "a set of men of a new and magical superstition." It is more than probable, therefore, that the persecutions to which they were exposed, and which they so cruelly suffered, were brought on themselves as much by their own preten-

sions to miraculous powers as by their ridiculous prophecies of the approaching termination of the world, and other such exaggerated statements.

Paley asks, who would write a history of Christianity but a Christian? I confess that while Christians should be thought best qualified to do so, yet I would undoubtedly expect from observant men of other nations, such as the Jews and the Romans, some satisfactory relation of the great events, the wonderful phenomena, which ushered in that religion. The travels, sufferings, labours, or successes of the apostles were doubtless of peculiar interest to the body to which they belonged; but there were other statements besides these of a far more important nature—claims of a unique character which Christianity set up, and which cannot be lost sight of. It would have been of the utmost consequence to after-ages that the truth about the divinity of Christ, and the miracles said to have been performed in testimony of his divinity, had been attested by other than Christian writers. The want of such evidence is a remarkable feature against the divine authority of that religion. We may be sure that, had there ever existed any evidence other than Christian in regard to these leading points, the early Roman Pontiffs would have known how to secure it. As the matter

stands, we have the four books called the Gospels chiefly to rely upon, and these are far from being satisfactory.

The first question with regard to those books which I ask is, who wrote them? What was his name? When were they written? The volumes themselves are silent upon these important points. Yet we are asked to credit accounts unauthenticated by any signature. How is this? A Christian, witnessing the grandest phenomena which ever occurred in the history of the world, would have rejoiced to bear testimony to them with his signature, though that testimony cost him his life. As it is, we are told that one Gospel is according to Matthew, that another is according to Mark, and so on. It is more than probable that, subsequent to the death of these apostles, the early Christian church, wishing to preserve the traditions relating to its origin, employed some parties to collect together all that was floating about Christian communities in relation to it; and there appearing differences in the accounts so gathered, it was determined to publish them separately. So much as regards the first three—Matthew, Mark, and Luke. With respect to the Gospel of John, it is so different from the rest that it has ceased to be considered by the best authorities as anything but apocryphal.

Indeed, it is necessary from a Christian point of view so to treat it; for as the three first-named apostles were ignorant of the things the Gospel of John contains, or, at least, make no mention of many of them, it is plain they cannot all be true. Therefore, the authority of John must be rejected in order to maintain the authority of the other three.

We are told that the apostles were ignorant fishermen, incapable of writing; but surely, if they were capable of performing miracles, they were capable of doing a little writing, it being no more necessary to such gifted persons to graduate in miracles, than in writing sufficient to relate the early history of their church, for the benefit of their followers and for the information of after-ages. It is comparatively unimportant whether Christ foretold, or did not foretell, the persecution of his followers. What is certain is, that they were persecuted. Heathen accounts furnish us with details of the fact, at once more abundant and startling than anything which the Christian writers themselves can produce; and there is nothing surprising in learning that they were persecuted. Christian missionaries at this day, in various parts of the world, are treated roughly, and run the risk of losing their lives. The passions of the multitude are about the same all over the globe. They are aroused

by the missionary in his zeal: he uses language which is far from complimentary to his hearers; he denounces in round terms the institutions under which they live; he asserts things which their experience and observation repudiate, to say nothing of their prejudices; and the consequence is uproar and strife, in which, as a matter of course, he fares the worst.

But when I read in Luke, "They shall lay hand on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake; and ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends, and some of you shall they cause to be put to death;" and again in Matthew, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you, and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake;" I say, when I read such statements I more than ever doubt the divinity of that religion which causes such manifestations as these. I am confirmed in my opinion that Christianity only in part harmonises with the mind of the Deity, and in part is against it. It is difficult to believe that any instruction which provokes such results can be in harmony with the will of our Maker.

When a man of science discourses on physics, and makes plain by demonstration the truths of his state-

ments or propositions, are we apt to applaud, or are we disposed to stone him? In like manner if our first teachers instructed us in the ways of truth and morality, harmoniously exhibiting the plans and will of the Deity, can it be supposed that humanity, however ignorant, would feel itself outraged, provoked to commit crime if not murder, and would fail to be convinced of the truth? Is it for a moment to be credited that even our "parents and brethren and kinsfolk and friends should betray us, and cause us to be put to death," when we are pursuing a course really appointed by the Deity? Rather let us believe that all persecution is provoked against us by our own manifestation of an improper spirit. We either denounce sin in harsh terms, or are perhaps too bold and presumptuous, impatient and unbending. When, for instance, we hear the words addressed to the Pharisees, "O generation of vipers! who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" what are we to think? This is not the style of language to employ towards those from whom you happen to differ. This is not the true spirit of Christianity. Rather do we find it in language like this, "Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of affliction; partly while ye were made a gazing-stock, both by reproaches and

afflictions, and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." (Heb. x.)

There can be no manner of doubt that the Christians underwent great trials and sufferings, which, in general, they bore with great fortitude. It is also certain that their patience, their constancy, and their resolution were exercised in a most remarkable manner, and were derived, as well as their other virtues, from the excellent instructions of their teachers, whether apostles or others, the chief spring being discoverable in the Founder of Christianity himself. While I freely admit all this, what I object to in these Gospels is, that there are no special accounts of the great incidents related in them. How is it that some distinguished men of the time did not write letters descriptive of the wonderful miracles said to have been performed, or relate in especial Epistles, directed to the faithful, the particulars of the resurrection of Lazarus, or of the crucifixion, or of the resurrection, or of the ascen-

sion? All these great subjects would have afforded very striking topics of interest, and, indeed, have excited such an intensity of feeling, that the wonder is that it could ever subside. The social commotion attendant on such alarming transactions would have been so vast, that the enthusiasm would remain to this day. The publication of such letters would have afforded contemporary adversaries of Christianity, as well as the world at large, an opportunity of examining and discussing, of confirming or denying, the truths of the statements therein made. Such letters would, at least, have been the production of some given individual or persons, and the worth of their contents would depend on the *bona fides* and judgment of the writer or writers. Such letters, if circulated at the time, would have created a profound interest, one which would have moved the attention of the Roman government. Inquiry into the facts related would have been instituted; they would have formed the links which seemed wanting of a great history. It would have required more than ordinary effrontery to pen such letters, unless the accounts they referred to were true. He would have been either a bold or an insane man who could assert having witnessed the raising of Lazarus from the dead, and having had subsequent conver-

sation with him, that did not believe he could meet subsequent inquiry with satisfaction and confidence.

But no; the accounts of these transactions were suffered to float about in society until some scores of years had elapsed, when some person chose to narrate them without even authenticating with his signature the truth of the facts. If such is a correct statement of the circumstances relating to the Gospels, it is scarcely fair to insist on our belief in all they demand; especially unfair when we consider that non-compliance is accompanied with the threat of eternal punishment!

But whatever may be said of the absence of any such correspondence, what is certain is that we have four books which profess to give us the history of the Founder's acts and of the institutions of Christianity. They are severally called the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. And, as we have observed, a very serious charge must be made in relation to the last named book. How does it happen that many important matters contained in it are not mentioned in any of the previous three? It can scarcely be that the Founder passed a great portion of his time alone with John, and communicated truths to him especially and secretly, and not to the others,

because we are informed that these four disciples were in constant attendance upon him.

When we consider, also, that certain doctrines contained in the Gospel of John are not mentioned in any of the other books, are we not compelled to believe that the book of John is apocryphal?—that it is, in short, a book compiled by the early Christian Church for what was no doubt considered beneficial to its members and to the people at large? The conclusion at which the best authorities in these matters have arrived is that the book of John is an after-production of the Church, and was written a considerable time after the others.

If it is thus made a book of doubtful authority—if a whole book can be looked on as supplementary—why may not portions of the other three be considered interpolations?—why may not some of the circumstances in those books be regarded as doubtful also, and not authenticated by the Founder? The notion of the deification of Christ, for instance, is one which he did not propound during his lifetime. His disciples added much to the doctrines which the founder did not contemplate. We know the remarkable anxiety as well as the zeal of his followers. We have evidence of their determination to gather converts to the new religion at almost any cost. A conspicuous

member of the early Church says he made himself "all things to all men, that some might be saved." We are told in Acts, 1st chap., that a few days after the death of the Founder, his disciples, relations, and friends met at Jerusalem and resolved to continue preaching the new religion, and that they thereupon settled some of the principal facts concerning him. They accordingly began their work by stating that Jesus was the Messiah sent by God, and appointed by Him the future judge of the human species; and that all should be baptised in his name. Is it too much, then, to affirm that the preaching of his disciples consisted of very different materials from the preaching of Jesus Christ? The doctrines of his equality with God, his future judgeship, and baptism in his name are points which he scarcely dwelt upon himself; and it requires a good deal of straining before we can discover that he encouraged such beliefs in the minds of his followers. At all events, they judged it necessary to publish such statements. They evidently knew the kind of facts which would tell and succeed best. Superstitious people love mysteries: remedies too simple are not thought much of by the ignorant. They discovered in their departed and beloved master titles to their esteem of which they did not dream the tenth part while he lived. He who had so lately been their

daily companion and friend had now become a god. The deification of emperors and other remarkable men in that age was not an uncommon proceeding; so that the disciples of Christ might have considered they were simply doing their master that honour which was his due in raising to the pedestal of a divinity him whom they loved and revered in their minds above all others. We would feel shocked at such an idea in our day, but it was common enough in their time; and this notion may have been the origin of that adoration which we witness since.

But why the necessity of all this argument; why all this labour to demonstrate what should, if true, be brighter and clearer than the sun itself—that Christ is God? If the Deity wished the world to accept such a fact, it is one which He could make plain in a moment. That it is not a part of the design of our Maker that such a doctrine should be accepted, may be gathered from the persecution and bloodshed which has attended the dissemination of such dogmas in many parts of the earth; whose inhabitants in various parts have resisted unto death such statements.

The work which the apostles undertook was in all probability greatly aided by the deification of Jesus Christ. To declare him as the Messiah and future

judge of the world would awaken attention wherever these earnest-minded, zealous men appeared. But what was infinitely more in favour of their success was the living up to the principles which they promulgated. The purity of their lives, their disinterested zeal, their benevolent action, were matters so conspicuous as to attract general notice. Such proceedings contrasted most favourably with the ordinary condition of life around them. There can be no doubt that corresponding results were produced among the people by the propagation of these principles. It could not have been otherwise. What I wish to point out here is, that this change in the character and conduct of mankind was owing to the dissemination of these principles, not to the belief in the Messiahship of Christ.

Paley quotes the testimony which Pliny bears to the behaviour of the new sect in his time, some fifty years after that of St. Paul. He says the character which this writer gives of the Christians of that age, and which was drawn from a pretty accurate inquiry, because he considered their moral principles as the point in which the magistrate was interested, is as follows. He tells the emperor that some of those who had relinquished the society, or who to save themselves pretended they had relinquished it, affirmed

that they were wont to meet together on a stated day, before it was light, and to sing among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ as a god, and to bind themselves by an oath against the commission of any wickedness, and that they would not be guilty of any theft or robbery or adultery, that they would never falsify their word, or deny a pledge committed to them when called upon to return it." This proves, Paley adds, that a morality more pure and strict than was ordinary, prevailed at that time in Christian societies. No doubt it does; but the point which I would insist on is, that this morality proceeded from the cultivation of the principles set forth in the oath by which they bound themselves, and not from any belief that Christ was God.

Paley very properly states that the proof of the Messiahship of Christ is found in the miraculous power to which he laid claim. Unquestionably this would be good proof of his divinity, if the whole matter of miracles could be placed beyond doubt. But when we consider that his disciples, the apostles, worked miracles as well as Christ himself, how are we to acknowledge his performance of miracles as any particular sign of his power? The very distinction sought in his favour is dispelled. These apostles were men, and nothing more. They never pretended to be

anything but men: by what power did they possess the prerogative of God? Supernatural power, if it were possessed by Christ, could not by him be delegated to others. It was Christ's distinctive qualification to work miracles. By it alone he would be known as the Messiah. A God cannot invest a man with a God's power without making him a God also. To give it to others would be to confound them with him, or raise them to an equality with him, which he could not do. And yet we are plainly told that the apostles performed miracles. Of course it will be argued that Christ gave power to the apostles to perform miracles. My answer to that is, in so doing he would destroy the distinction made in his favour—the sign by which he was known among men, and without which there was no proof of his Messiahship. A God may wield the power of a God, but it cannot be delegated to men. Either Christ alone worked miracles, or none were worked. If the apostles wrought miracles—and several instances are given where they did so—then we shall be in the right to conclude that all the statements about miracles are pretensions designed to maintain the authority of the apostles and teachers of the Church—a habit commenced in the earliest times, and continued throughout the whole period of its existence, and even brought down to our own days in some communities of Christians.

In fine, the deification of Christ springs from the same human source as the promulgation of the doctrine of immaculate conception, or that still later dogma, Papal infallibility. In all those things we behold the wisdom or weakness of men.

The advocates of Christ's divinity forget that they are robbing our Maker of His attributes ; for to have any one to help Him, is it not to proclaim His impotence ? The Omnipotent requires neither aid nor mediator. Such a conception would detract from His power and perfection, while it would also injure the idea of His unity. The expression of His will, not in words, but in action, goes forth from Him, and is sufficient, at all times and in all places, to effect His purposes. The argument of the logos, from which Christ derives his title to deification, is altogether weak and groundless. Employed originally by the school of Plato, who lived very many years before Christ was born, it is also found in the writings of Philo the Jew, who also lived before Christ. The matter is stated by them somewhat as follows. That the Deity, being essentially spiritual, could have no relation with material things, they being too gross in their nature for Him to come into contact with, and consequently that He required some one to carry out His views in respect to the Creation. The Greek word

logos was adopted to signify an emanation from Him. In the New Testament, it is only found in the Gospel of John, a book written some generations after Christ died. There alone it is that a claim to divinity is set up by him on behalf of Christ. John declares that, "In the beginning was the Word (*logos*), and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among men." This conception of Christ being the Word, or thought (for *logos* signifies thought, as well as the expression of thought), of God has led to a great deal of speculation from ancient times even to the present. One distinguished Churchman stated recently, among other curious things, that "The *logos* is the thought of God, not intermittent and precarious like human thought, but subsisting in the intensity of a personal form."

This is a fair specimen of the obscure manner in which people will permit themselves to argue when they adopt human fancies, and have to uphold a system to which they are bound by ties of faith and not by reason.

Let us disabuse our minds from the notion that God has ever appeared among men, or that when He does come among us (if that ever will be), that He will be so like us as to be confounded with us. God is not so unfair in His dealings with man as to appear among us

in such a disguise that we shall doubt His identity, and then hold us responsible for our doubts and rejection of Him. We should hold other thoughts of the justice of the Almighty. What is true concerning Christ is, that he was one of those characters of rare excellence who, from time to time, appear among men in all nations. They stand for awhile as examples—examples of sincerity, purity, unselfishness. Such men derive their excellence from communion with the Almighty Spirit. They apprehend, as it were by intuition, the ways of the Most High better than others, and persist in following them though to their detriment. In short, they possess and enjoy more of a spiritual nature than is shared by others in the world.

The Jews had long been expecting a Messiah or heavenly messenger, who, when he appeared, would bring to their country many advantages. All classes, from the highest to the lowest, the priesthood included, believed in this advent. This was not a vague and cursory belief, but one which had a national and widespread bearing: it possessed the people at all periods of their history, in their days of humiliation as well as in the time of their prosperity. Is it not likely, then, that if the Messiah ever had appeared, they would have recognised him for whom they so

anxiously waited, and on whom so much of their hopes depended? Yet, in the face of so much that is national, we are told that though Jesus Christ was the real Messiah, and that though he performed many miracles, his brethren, the Jews, knew him not, nor believed in him;—that, in fact, they were disappointed with him. For, instead of advancing their nation and kingdom by victories and triumphs, those whom they despised, the heathen, were placed upon an equality with themselves. Because he widened the kingdom of God, and admitted others who did not conform to the law of Moses, therefore they would reject him.

The preaching of well-regulated affections, purity, and moral rectitude, we are led to believe, was not in favour in those times. God sends a messenger, and his message is disbelieved by the very people to whom he is sent. A failure is the result. This is a singular way of dealing with a divine messenger. One would suppose that such a personage would have power to make himself known; and, indeed, we are told he possessed the power of working miracles, and did work them. Very curious and unaccountable then is the fact that the Jews, for whom the Messiah was intended, did not recognise him. Very strange that a messenger, coming all the way from heaven to a particular nation, should be unknown and unrecognised

by them—should be unable to convince them of the validity of his credentials, and should have resigned his brethren to their fate, and turn away to the Gentiles.

Methinks, if a true messenger came amongst us in London to-day from heaven, we should give him a very different reception. He, on his part, would compassionately tell us of our shortcomings and the way to avoid them. He would not upbraid us for the evil we lie under, but would show us how to escape misery. And if he would show miraculous power by raising from the dead some of our city magistrates who are known to have passed away from among us, how could we dare to doubt his Messiahship, or refuse to trust and follow him? We would scarcely insist upon sending such an one to the Old Bailey for trial and condemnation, but rather would we hasten to exalt him with all honour.

If I were an inhabitant of New York, and were told that a person possessing the power of working miracles had appeared in London, and that he had repeatedly raised the dead to life, and that notwithstanding the Londoners put him to death because he told them their faults, I should be strongly inclined to believe that either he worked no miracles, or that they did not kill him. No set of men ever lived who would venture to destroy a person knowing him to be gifted

with so remarkable and tremendous a power. They would not dare to hurt such a person, much less to spit upon and destroy. We are forced to conclude that the whole account as to the performance of miracles is an invention. The Jews still expect a Messiah. I have seen them waiting daily at the gates of Eastern cities for his advent; and however silly such an errand, yet we may credit them with so much sagacity to know their Messiah when he does appear.

But, besides the Jews, we have abundant evidence of other respectable parties present in Judea at the time of the presence there of Jesus Christ, and who had ample opportunity of knowing the truth of such Messiahship and of the miracles which he wrought. The Romans were the rulers of the country of the Jews, and it was before Pontius Pilate, a Roman, that Jesus Christ was accused, tried, and condemned to be crucified. Admitting the truthfulness of the account of the mock trial which he underwent, of his degradation, the insults heaped upon him, ending in his condemnation and death, what are we to say to the profound silence with which the Roman historians treat of so remarkable a person?

The Romans never regarded him as a peculiar, much less as a divine being. Pilate saw nothing in him to cause him to interfere peremptorily for his

safety, and the most that he could allege was that he was an innocent man, adding that the responsibility of his death must lie with his countrymen, the Jews. At the trial, of which we have an account, we are not told of the performance of any miracles. And yet that was exactly the place and opportunity at which a messenger having a message to communicate would choose to deliver it, rather than be violently hurried out of life with his message yet unrevealed to a large and most influential portion of the public. And then consider the advantage to the Roman empire—that empire which Christianity was so shortly to spread over—which would have resulted from having the testimony and support of Roman writers and governors declaring in their public despatches that such and such miracles were performed by so great a messenger. Is it possible to imagine that so astounding an affair occurred at Judea, and that neither the Jews, who were most interested, nor the Romans, who afterwards benefited most by the undertaking, could recognise any importance either in the messenger, or in his miracles, or in his gospel? And if those two several peoples, between whom there could be no manner of collusion or understanding to thwart the so-called messenger, failed to perceive, being present, the momentous transactions then said to be occurring under

their very observation, and totally ignored them, by what show of reason are we called upon to accept these things as true; and by what measure of justice are we consigned to everlasting perdition if we, at this distance of time, according to our judgment and conviction, regard them as false?

If we required a justification for such a rejection, we should find one at hand, namely, in the enormity of the sentence against us who disbelieve so marvellous a a story resting on such one-sided, biased ground of evidence. Besides, it is totally irrelevant to God's disposition and plans that He should consign us to everlasting punishment for such disbelief. The penalties which He has attached to disobedience of His laws are easy to understand. They are relevant to His laws, and in proportion to our measure of disobedience is the penalty. Are we idle instead of industrious, we shall neither have crops in our fields nor wheat in our barns. Are we gluttonous and intemperate in our habits, our health and our prospects suffer. Are we fond of quarrelling and strife, our homes, instead of being the abodes of loving and affectionate hearts, become the habitation of wolves in human form. Are we insincere and untruthful and unjust in relation to others, we cannot escape injury to ourselves in a variety of ways.

The Church excites our terror by consigning us to everlasting flames, unless we believe in the gospel. Innocent little children and others, countless millions in number, who have never heard it, are all doomed alike to perish. We are compelled by such instruction to believe either that our God is a most heartless tyrant, or that the Church is a human instrument. However operative it might have been in the dark ages, the Church is now, in its turn, apparently doomed to destruction. If it blindly cling to its credulity, it will surely be swept away; but if it cast out its idols, there will yet be hope for it.

The Pope is unconsciously helping forward the work of spiritual liberty and regeneration. He draws the cords of bondage so tight that they are sure to break. He shows how dogmas have accumulated by what he himself has done. Some twenty years since he pronounced the doctrine of the immaculate conception, and now he professes that of Papal infallibility. This is how religion is formed. It is visibly a human device: not so are First Principles. Truth has for its foundation unalterable laws, everlasting in their nature, while the schemes of man are known by their selfishness and folly. This proceeding of the Pope is a more important matter than at first sight appears; for if, in the nineteenth century, we observe

the spectacle of so much superstition, we need be at no loss to account for the greater exhibition, in this respect, of the first century, when pagan darkness covered Europe—when, by primitive Christianity, the knowledge of the only true God was being imperfectly set forth, to be subsequently corrupted and stifled by the inventions of men.

If I have been successful in showing that the systems of religion, the so-called divine revelations, which have been imposed by human teachers upon a credulous world, bear the stamp of inconsistency and opposition to the patent evidence of our Maker's laws as exhibited in His system of the universe, can I be censured for terming them "blind guides" to happiness; or can we hope that its attainment will be the result of following them? But, so strong is the force of association, that men cannot divest themselves of superstitious reverence for the soulless idols which they have been accustomed to worship, and the task of a reformer must always, at least at first, be that of an iconoclast. For this reason I shall, before entering upon the subject of reconstruction, devote a a little more time to the consideration of those stumbling-blocks which the perverted ingenuity of our forefathers has placed in the path of all wayfarers to the common goal.

CHAPTER III.

STUMBLING-BLOCKS IN THE WAY.

There can be no question that a great deal too much stress has been laid upon the fact of our Maker's love to us. What is more important for us to know is our duty, and how to perform it. To know that God loves us is comforting, but it is not enough. We must show our love to Him by executing His purposes. We must learn what His will consists in, both with respect to our bodies and our souls, and then be obedient to that will. One aspect of our Maker's design in respect to us is, that our life should chiefly manifest a working attitude. It is by activity that our bodies and souls grow and strengthen. To idleness God has attached heavy penalties. The unploughed field produces a plentiful crop of weeds. The neglected knife soon becomes rusty. The stagnant pool rapidly becomes offensive and deadly. So it is with ourselves. The stagnant mind and the idle hands are the ready prey of mischief, followed too soon by misery. Not so if we are occupied in

some healthy pursuit—employed in some useful manner, either to benefit ourselves or others. Some industrious occupation, by which we earn a livelihood to support ourselves or our families, is honourable and good. Or, if there is no need for the exercise of such industry, we may always improve ourselves by pursuing some art or science, on our achievements in which we may look back with satisfaction.

We may love God very much. We may admire, worship, and adore Him greatly, but the way in which He desires us most to show our gratitude to Him is to work out our own happiness. We should ascertain in what Improvement consists, and then earnestly follow it out. In this manner, instead of remaining, as most of us do, in a very degraded state of being, we exalt ourselves through the employment of the intellectual machinery placed in us for the very purpose.

Some have asked why they are bound to practise virtue. The answer is obvious. It is true they are free agents, and in so far not bound to do anything. Only if we desire to live, and study our happiness, instead of practising vice and producing misery, we may as well cultivate virtue.

There are diseased minds, even as there are diseased bodies. The one kind of disease, as well as the other, may be inherited, or may be contracted during life.

A diseased mind shows itself in the way in which it regards truth, as it relates to our happiness. The Hindoo, for example, fully believes that human sacrifices, as well as other pernicious or grotesque observances, obtain for him remission of sins and eternal happiness. This idea is inculcated from his very childhood. The mind by such instruction is distorted, —in other words, diseased,—and the consequence is that the patient is unable to perceive the absurdity of the monstrous wrong which he does, both to the Almighty and to himself.

It requires no great research to discover that the minds of the originators of Christianity were in a condition fit to believe in miracles and such like things. It was customary among the Jews, the people who were the first Christians, to believe in such matters; hence the alacrity to receive without doubting or difficulty all such manifestations.

But, leaving speculation as to the state of their mind, let us come to a question nearer to ourselves. What is the effect on us if we believe such statements? This is a serious question, and we are bound, as responsible beings, to take it fully into consideration. Doubtless the effect on our minds is to make us more credulous, to disincline us for inquiry, to lull us into accepting all things in faith. Now I declare

this consequence is among the worst that can befall us; for if anything is true it is this—that for our self-preservation, physical and moral, our great duty to our Maker and ourselves cannot be fully carried out, unless we make every use of our faculties; not receiving and taking things for granted, but inquiring, examining, closely inspecting, before adopting, all the things which we hear, or which are otherwise brought to our attention.

Whenever an idea is received into the mind which is not founded on positive fact, it tends to weaken it, just as rotten stones put into a wall diminish its strength. Such ideas disturb the course of our life—make us hesitate on great occasions when there ought to be neither doubt nor hesitation. For instance, the idea expressed in the words, "Whatever ye ask of the Father in my name, He will give it you." This sentiment acted upon has doubtless led thousands out of the way of the real track which they should have pursued: it has diverted many a person from real work into sentimental listnessness and longing. Such persons are accustomed to look for miraculous intervention in their favour. The countryman in the fable thought that his prayers to Jupiter would be sufficient to help his cart out of the mire. Poor man! He should have been taught not to rely on such petitions,

but to bring such material force to bear upon the wheels of his cart as would get it out.

Ideas which draw the mind from a clear conception of its duty should be deliberately cast out. They should on no account be entertained; for they perplex without profiting us. Sacrifices and services not required of us by our Maker should cease to be imposed: they prevent the soul from performing its real duty, and cruelly keep it in torment to the very day of death. The injunction to remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy, is void of sense and of reason. What is there on earth that requires me to keep one day more uprightly than another? Why should I be better on Sunday than any other day in the week? We should every day, nay, every hour, of our lives be fulfilling our duty, that is, walking in harmony with the ways of our Maker. Let us remember what that duty is. To love our Maker and our fellow-creatures. This duty is to be performed at all times, and on all occasions, in a pure, cheerful, heartfelt manner. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour," said a high authority; "for love is the fulfilling of the law." This was well said, for in this utterance consists the best part of our duty. If we are just and true to others, as we should be to ourselves, we cannot well do wrong.

If then our duty consist in loving our Maker and our neighbour, propositions which we can readily agree to and understand, why are we asked to believe things which have nothing to do with these? Why, for example, are we asked to believe that Jesus Christ was murdered, under the sanction of our Maker, in order that we might be saved from sin? Such a requirement at once throws us off the real line of duty. The issue before us was very plain before. Does not the whole aim and requirement of our Maker amount to this—that we should love Him and our fellow-creatures? We perfectly understand this proposition. Every faculty in us consents to it. We see our way clearly to accomplish it. Why, then, make the path more difficult by importing a new condition—that of faith in a sacrifice, whose effect is to render the observance of that duty nugatory?

The reason why the religions of the world work insufficient good among mankind is because they are unnatural. If religion were really consonant with the nature of those for whom it was designed, we should all receive it with alacrity. But as the thing hitherto presented as the governing principle of our lives contains impossible ideas, we cannot receive it. It takes no hold on our affections. We imbibe the draught with a wry face, and all our life long after cease to be

natural, loving creatures of the Deity. We live in a condition of fear and trembling, of doubt and alarm, as to the future state that we are to occupy.

Starting with false premises of truth in the dogmas of the Church, mankind have experienced a variety of non-natural results. Bands of fanatics of all degrees of earnestness have appeared in all ages, from Simon Stylites on his column downwards, whose chief aim seems to have been to make themselves as miserable as possible while in this life, in order that they may be happy in the next—a singularly mistaken way of qualifying for happiness, but which nevertheless is very common even in our time.

Can those be blamed who assert that the Bible should not be accepted unconditionally as a guide for life? Never was there a compilation so contradictory in meaning and terms as the collection of works known under this name. While peace and goodwill are declared to be the message of the New, bloodshed, war, and other crimes fill many a page of the Old Testament; and the Church in all ages has forged many a weapon out of it to further its own purposes. But, with or without the Bible in hand, the Church is everywhere sinking in importance. With some nations of Europe its influence stands at zero. Everywhere its teaching, if not actually rejected, is certainly not relied

upon. In real life it is regarded as impractical and obscure in its aim and purposes. Conventionally it is received; but, in practice, its instruction is not accepted.

That some of the books of the Bible are inconsistent in their bearings, and contradictory to others in language, and tone, and meaning, cannot be denied. Unquestionably there is much that is precious and good mingled in it with much that is worthless and evil. Its curses and imprecations, its account of the Omnipotent as ever ready to take vengeance upon His enemies, set forth the Divine character in a very revolting and unnatural light. They tend to destroy that affectionate and loving relationship which should ever exist between man and his Maker. One of the utterances of Jesus Christ was, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Does any one mean to contend that the character of God as depicted in the Old Testament is the perfection which he meant us to have in view?

There is an immeasurable difference between the statements of man, whether found in the Bible or elsewhere, and the judgments of our Maker. These decisions of the great Lawgiver it is our chief business to study. It is by looking closely into, and considering them, that we shall derive a true guide of life.

Hitherto, for thousands of years, man has conducted himself like a being without sight. He has hitherto ignored his Maker's will, and has set up designs of his own. And shall we be surprised if the result has not been satisfactory? Could it have been otherwise? Any structure, however humble, unless it is raised in harmony with scientific rules, must soon or late come to the ground. In like manner will it be with society. Unless the laws which govern our social fabric are based on sound principles, the time will come when the whole will fall. It is not a question of imagination or sentiment, but one of simple fact.

There are many reasons why a verbal revelation is unnecessary, and among them are the following.

It prevents man from learning the will of his Maker from His works. The broad universe, and man himself, are our Maker's great work, which we must study if we are ever to learn what His ways are. By observation we learn everything else; why not our Maker's will by observation too? It is not His system to reveal anything to us by words. Language is too narrow and imperfect a vehicle for His purposes. It takes a universe to convey His ideas.

Experience tells us that the fitting employment of all our faculties is the only true means of attaining happiness; that the latter necessitates the active use of all

our powers. Now the newest revelation, contrary to experience, declares the efficacy of simple faith for this purpose. What man admits the truth of this in his heart of hearts? Happiness is, we know, only obtained by working out certain principles which our Maker has established. Unless we get at these principles and work them out for ourselves, we cannot obtain the happiness which we ought to have and enjoy. And He requires us to ascertain for ourselves, each one for himself, what these principles are, and to be governed by them; they are active, living principles. Like a seed sown in the earth, so these principles when they are planted in the mind and sink into it, and are thoroughly understood, and have become part of our mental property, regulate all our actions. They are, in fact, the food which we employ for the growth of the spirit.

What results have we under the present systems? Our very good works declare the enormity of the evils under which we labour. Our colossal charities, our jails, our hospitals, our lunatic asylums, our almshouses, all these reveal the extent of the folly of our ways. They are all remedies to meet demands which should never have come upon society. They are monuments erected to our disgrace and shame. That they are necessary under the present artificial system is

no defence of them; under a different system, under a true system, none of them would be required. Charity is not that inestimable virtue of which we hear so much. It is itself the fruit of evil. In a properly constituted society there should be no such element as almsgiving. A people devoted to virtue would know the full value of industry, while forethought and frugality would enable them to make provision sufficient for any extraordinary or accidental deprivation or loss. Whatever we really desire, that we obtain if we employ the proper means: if we cultivate the principles which conduct to virtue. But our teachers impede us by erroneously placing before us directions, which, having no foundation in truth, serve only to delude and take us off the track. The whole way is perfectly plain, if we are left to ourselves. No revelation is necessary to tell us that like produces like—"Whatever we sow, that we shall reap." Why, then, should our minds be sown with unnatural stories of miracles and of other things opposed alike to nature and to reason? What result can we expect from such culture, but a crop of superstition and error? Our minds are fed with absurd stories, and as a consequence are loose and unstable. The judgment with which we are furnished is an instrument which is capable of being warped and injured if improper demands are too frequently made on our credulity.

There is such a thing as a moral rupture, as well as a physical one. It is only when we preserve our judgment in a sound state that we can make a proper way through life as becomes reponsible beings. The very liberty with which we are endowed as free agents, the power to choose good or evil, of necessity requires us constantly to employ our best discrimination. To cultivate that which is virtuous, so that we may improve ourselves, requires us to exercise a continual watch on all our proceedings. All our motives, all our desires, our words, our feelings, and our pursuits, have to be closely scrutinised. To acquit ourselves creditably, we must keep alive all our critical faculties. We cannot afford to blunt them by the surrender of our judgment and our reason in favour of, no matter how revered a dogma, if such doctrine is palpably at variance with the rules of our Maker.

The weeds in the garden and in the field, the stagnant pool under the window, the rusty knife in the drawer, quarrel in the bosom of the family, crime in the street or dark lanes of the city, and that greatest of all disasters, war between nations, each and all have their use. They are evidence of departure from the will of our Sovereign Ruler—unmistakable signs of bad work instead of good. They without doubt show that ignorance, neglect, and

wrong-doing cannot fail to produce evil. Sin or evil is the sign of a broken law—the result of an erroneous line of conduct. It is the token which the Almighty has appointed, to show that the way in which we are all proceeding is wrong—the lighthouse which warns us to steer clear of the rocks; His object in thus invariably producing results corresponding to our course, whether good or bad, is to instruct us. It is with the view to improve our knowledge in the production of that which is good, that what is bad, and its cause, are exhibited to us. As free agents on earth, though acting under His immutable laws, it is for us to choose whether we shall produce that which is good or that which is evil.

Evil or sin has, therefore, its use in the design of the Almighty.

As what is called sin, therefore, serves a useful purpose in the economy of the Almighty; whence arises the necessity of a propitiation or atonement for sins? Better by far were it to state the causes which produce sin in a plain and sensible manner, so as to convince the understanding and thereby instruct humanity, than to wrap up the matter in a mysterious and inscrutable dogma, which but serves to bewilder, mislead, and set mankind quarrelling with each other to the end of time.

Evil is that which invariably attends error or wrong-doing. If we do a wrong act, a corresponding consequence is produced. If it be a physical wrong, the evil assumes a physical shape; if a moral or spiritual wrong, it takes a moral shape. Evil, then, is the constant mark which our Maker has appointed to accompany every bad action—the sign by which the benevolent Maker of all shows us the nature of what we have been doing—the test by which we may judge of our actions. If there were no evil result appearing, no evident sign of wrong-doing, there would be no knowing when we sinned; and the consequence would be a confusion in all matters; health and morals would be so inextricably involved in mystery that the ultimate result would be chaos and the utter ruin of the human race. But a benevolent God has willed it otherwise. He shows us, in language that is unmistakable in its terms, that whatever we sow we shall reap.

It is not because any of our Maker's plans are imperfect, or because He has any pernicious design towards us, that these things appear; rather is it an additional proof of His goodness to us. He wishes us to understand Him well, in order that we may obtain a higher position for ourselves—a greater glory than we have yet seen. He would awaken us from our ignorance, so as to enjoy a better

light in all that concerns our welfare and happiness here and hereafter.

All human actions, then, admit of being described as either good or bad. That which is in harmony with the will of our Maker is good, and that which is opposed to it is bad or evil. As free agents we are at liberty to do good or evil; it is the chief business of our lives to discern between the two things.

Everything occurring around, or within us, has an effect upon us. It may be imperceptible, yet nevertheless it accomplishes a result. We are accordingly continually exposed to two kinds of causes: physical, or those which affect our bodies; and moral, or those which affect our minds.

The evil of uttering a lie, or committing sin of any kind, is this, that like seed, it grows within us; the propensity increases. We acquire habits rapidly: it becomes us to see that we are cultivating the best kind, and we should carefully root up the worst form of habits; for, like weeds, the bad grow fast upon the field of our minds—sometimes, alas! too fast to be overcome.

There is a grand purpose in the appointment on earth of things which corrupt and injure and destroy, and it is this—that our faculties should be employed, in discerning them, and the reason of their effects

Through the exercise of the faculties in this manner our wit becomes sharpened, and we are thereby enabled to discern other still more important things, which otherwise would have been totally hidden from our view. Suppose everything in the world were good, and that no evil were anywhere apparent, and suppose that all our actions, thoughts, and purposes were also good, we should pass through life very tranquilly indeed, but at the same time our life would be like that of lambs—very innocent, but very worthless ; we should never exert ourselves to reach that knowledge which has much to do with the improvement of our nature and condition ; we should never reach that high destiny which belongs to us as rational beings ; we should never cultivate to the full extent the powers of an ever-living soul, and consequently we should be deprived of the best and highest enjoyments of this life ; and, what is still more to the purpose, we should not be prepared to enter upon another and nobler existence.

Evil then has a useful purpose in it. The plans of the Maker would have been imperfect without its presence on earth. We should remember that all the evils which befall men are consequences of their own errors. In whatever form they appear, they are all our own work. Our Maker has nothing to do with

them. Nor has such a person as the devil, or abstract cause of evil, existence in fact. It is the poorest possible compliment to an almighty Maker to suppose that if He desired good for His creatures, He would suffer an evil spirit to tempt them to commit evil, and thus to wage a continual warfare against Himself.

It seems, therefore, unnecessary, if not fallacious, to assert that because we suffer and are wretched in this life, we shall have greater gain in consequence in the life to come. Our sufferings in this life, we should remember, are the consequences of our own errors, or those of our parents, or those of society. They are not the distribution of our Maker, and it is wrong to expect compensation from Him for them hereafter. A contrary view of our relationship to Him makes it difficult for us to trust Him. If He sends us suffering, what sympathy can there exist between us? It is useless for a person to promise me great kindness in his home, while all the way on the road he does not cease to worry and maltreat me. In a general way, I would rather avoid such a person. Why do people apply a different rule to spiritual things? While what they call the "hand of affliction" is on them, why should they regard that as the time during which God is especially near them?

There is no such thing as evil in the world which

humanity cannot avoid. Is the traveller justified in calling that precipice down which he fell an inevitable evil? Where were his sight and his judgment? Are you attacked with disease? Look well to the rules of health: you must have broken them in some manner. Have you been guilty of crime? It is the inevitable fruit of a course of conduct to which you have, against your own judgment, given yourself up.

Everything has its use; but everything has a place proper for it. Force has its use; but force improperly applied is destructive to persons or things. Fire is a useful agent when it is required, but when it ignites a house it is an evil. Water likewise has a hundred valuable uses, but we can conceive it to be a great evil if it rush down and devastate our property, our homes, and our lives. In a word, all things formed by our Maker are good when applied to their proper uses. It is only when an object is out of its place that it works what we denominate an evil.

There is that which is good and there is that which is bad in all things; and as there are degrees of excellence in all things, so there are degrees in good and in evil. There is, for instance, in man an infinite gradation of character between the thoroughly good and the thoroughly bad. Perhaps no character on earth is so good as to be without a bad trait, and perhaps no

character so bad as to be without a good trait. And what is true of character is also true of everything besides. There is something of good, and something of what we call evil, in all things.

There is a profound wisdom in this arrangement of good and evil which should not be lost sight of. Were there not this difference in the quality of things, there would be no scope for the exercise of human reason. It is by the exercise of our reason and judgment in the task of discrimination that we are to build up our character for goodness and virtue. It is by our reason that we are to choose the good and avoid the evil.

It must be wrong therefore to surrender our reason to any claim, however specious, to suffer ourselves to be deprived of the only instrument which can ensure our safety. Any demand upon us for the surrender of so valuable a faculty must be looked upon with the greatest alarm and suspicion. We should scrupulously guard our reason against every attack, no matter how apparently friendly the quarter whence it comes, being assured that reason is by far the most valuable gift of our Maker: it is, in fact, the light which is to guide us into paths of comfort and safety.

The neglected field soon becomes a scene of weeds, and so it is with man. Every wakeful hour of his existence, he is either preparing himself for crime and

misery, or for virtue and happiness. He may be perfectly unconscious of such results, but they are nevertheless ripening. If we sow the seeds of neglect and indifference, be sure they will crop up in the form of evil of one sort or other. We should always remember that we shall reap exactly what we sow. If we study to cultivate any particular virtue, that virtue will increase in us; and *vice versâ*, if we allow any vice to get the better of us, we cannot tell into what degree of crime it may plunge us.

As there are degrees of superiority and inferiority in all things, so there are degrees of goodness and badness in all the actions of men. It is not possible for human intelligence to draw the line between the two, they so blend one in the other. The best action of the best man on earth, in the estimation of the All-perfect One, would in all probability be found very faulty and imperfect, while the worst action of the worst man might be held excusable in His sight. To produce that which is good is manifestly our duty as well as our interest, as it contributes to preserve us in happiness; and the only way to do good is actively to cultivate the principles which influence these results, diligently avoiding those principles of action whence spring evil. Evil is the fruit of every imperfect state, while good is the fruit of every perfect one. According

as we perfect ourselves we produce good; according as we neglect to do so evil appears; and every condition of existence not in harmony with the rules of our Maker is imperfect, and therefore liable to produce evil.

As his actions, whether good or bad, reveal the state of the individual, and are according to the training bestowed upon him; so it is with nations, for nations are but a congregation of individuals. Observations upon our own times show us abundantly that we have failed to make any real progress in happiness. Our instruction, then, must be faulty. We have made progress in science and the arts; but in the knowledge of the well-being of general humanity, a knowledge chiefly in the care of the Church, there has been a stand-still.

When will men learn that the essentials of life consist not in territorial aggrandisement, nor in personal influence and such like things, but in walking in the ways of the Maker? All territory and power are His, and for man to claim dominion over any part is to set up the demands of an usurper. The frequency of wars for such an object, without ever settling the rights of the combatants, sufficiently demonstrates that mankind too frequently insists on the pursuit of ways which are opposed to the designs of our Maker; that it fails to recognise in Him the bountiful Giver of all

good things, or, in itself, a body of creatures wholly dependent upon His sufferance, equally unworthy of His favour, and with no higher claim to a preferential distribution of His favours than is conferred by the longer or shorter prevalence of a violation of the impartial Divine economy.

The world has lately witnessed two of the grandest acts of barbarism ever perpetrated—the gigantic war between Germany and France, and that still more rare phenomenon, the destruction of Paris by its own Commune. Though these two events will be regarded by some as totally different in kind, yet they are both the product of one common source—ignorance or neglect of our Maker's rules. In the one case we observe the two most civilized nations of Europe destroying each other in the most wholesale manner; while, in the other, Frenchmen are pitted against Frenchmen. Relations of kindred and country are totally lost sight of in the most burning animosity. When people have ceased to cultivate the true relations of love, it matters not who they are; whether brothers of the same family, friends of the same district, people of the same neighbourhood, all ties of human affinity are ruthlessly broken.

It is a false theory which asserts that to be prepared for war is to preserve peace. When a great nation

makes extensive preparations for war, the neighbouring nations take alarm and prepare themselves also. In this manner a warlike feeling is generated. The very preparedness becomes the cause of war. The French fancied they were better equipped with their chassepots and their mitrailleuses for a struggle than the Germans, and they became eager for the fight. An idle pretext was sufficient to satisfy them. In their ignorance and fury they rushed towards their own destruction.

It is all very well to make a boast of the cultivation of the arts of commerce ; there is another cultivation still more necessary for cementing together mankind in a manner totally different from anything yet obtained. We must entertain a more exalted estimation of man as man. Life, and the love of man, must be looked upon in a light different from what they have been hitherto. Principles underlying all our relations, whether social or political, require to be cultivated. The art of commerce will not save us ; something broader and more stable is necessary, namely, the performance of those duties nationally, which we find so beneficial personally—the cultivation of those principles which produce love and affection among men.

PART II.

SYNTHETIC.

CHAPTER IV.

HEALTH OF BODY.

It is far more easy to overthrow an old system than to construct a new one. This fact is merely an exemplification of a great law which we find pervading Nature. All things are susceptible of decay, and all things are capable of producing decay in some shape or other; but comparatively few have in them any faculty of renovation, and, even where the latter exists, it energises with greater difficulty than its correlative faculty. This truth is everywhere forced upon us. That connection between soul and body, whose perfection has been the growth of years, may be severed in a moment. The palace, in constructing which a century and a hundred thousand skilled workmen passed away, may be destroyed by an ignorant mob in the course of a few hours.

To this great law I too am forced to yield. Even my weak, unsophisticated efforts against systems whose construction has occupied thousands of years, have, I

think, been moderately successful. I do not claim to have done the work of demolition thoroughly. Abler men before me have plied the hammer of common-sense against the idols of superstition and prejudice with far greater effect; and the completion of the iconoclasm is reserved for others. But I do claim to have shown that certain fundamental conceptions of human belief, almost as old as the history of man himself, have simply nothing beyond their extreme old age which entitles them to our respect.

When I come, however, to set forward other and worthier conceptions in their place, my work becomes constructive, and, consequently, more difficult. If I fail, therefore, in the task of expounding the principles upon which health of body and mind are founded, there is still no room for surprise or doubt. That a new system has defects is no reason why we should retain an old one still more defective. Nor do I wish that the rules of life propounded in this work should be accepted, unless when they are in accord with reason, experience, and common sense—the only infallible guides on the road to happiness.

To know how to preserve ourselves in health should be the first of our duties. In this duty is wrapped up much of human enjoyment and happiness. And yet, singularly enough, most people entirely disregard the

rules of health. The consequence is that we are perpetually hearing of disease among the community. We continually know some person or other in a state of ill health. It has been well remarked that people know a great deal more about the treatment of their dogs and of their cattle than they do of the laws of health in respect to themselves. They take a great deal of pains in rearing the animals of the farm, while they, perhaps, totally neglect the human animals of their own household. These are suffered to trespass in every way against the rules of health, fall ill, and are carried to a premature grave, chiefly for want of the knowledge of a very few simple rules. It is a great mistake to leave such matters as our health to the care of the doctor. When that gentleman is called in, the mischief done is too frequently complete. The patient is past all human care. The disease has already destroyed the tissues of life. But though he be in time to arrest its progress, how often does he not cure one malady by leaving in the body the seeds of some other disease? It is only when the means which he employs are in harmony with our Maker's rules that the patient really benefits. This is what the physician calls helping Nature.

We should see, in every instance of disease, some broken law which should have been avoided. As

matters go, we commence by breaking the rules of health, and then we are surprised to find ourselves ill. In no way do we more dishonour and abuse ourselves than by this disobedience. By observing the rules strictly, we preserve our health wholly. Good health is the prize which we gain, because we harmonise with our Maker's ways, while disease is the penalty we incur when we disregard His rules.

The progress and perfection of humanity depends in a large measure on the observance of these rules. Human development cannot be fairly carried out unless these principles, which lie at the foundation of all health, are diligently practised. As inherited disease and deformity is the result of broken law, in like manner the careful observance of the rules will tend to the increase of the beautiful. Good health is not only important to individuals, but it is of importance to humanity, as human offspring inherit the good or bad health of their parents. In every way, therefore, the preservation of health is of very high importance.

But it may be asked how are we to know that the rules of health propounded by you are the laws of our Maker? Our experience convinces us that they are so. Our judgment approves of them as such, and

if we submit them to personal experiment—if we give them a fair trial, we shall have the opportunity of observing, by their results, that they are divine. We shall surely find that they lead us into health.

Besides, if we contrast the observance of these rules with human conduct of the opposite character, how brightly they shine! Gluttony, intemperance, filth, obviously lead to misery and ruin. And as these ways are plainly wrong, their opposites are as manifestly right.

Granting, then, that these are the laws of health, it follows that they are the rules of our Maker. If so, how sacred they should appear to us! What great value we should set on them! For His mind has been occupied in their formation. He, as it were, discovers Himself to us in them. They are points of contact between Him and us. Indeed, they appeal to us as if they were His very voice. If we listen and follow that voice, great is our benefit. If we disregard it, infinite is the injury to us. That voice can alone restrain us. If we do not recognise it, there is nothing else which can control us from evil. To thoroughly accept and understand Him, and make His will the rule of our life, is in reality to enter His kingdom. He then becomes our real head. All our actions are guided and controlled by Him. In such a

kingdom there can be no jarring, for all is in harmony with His will.

Six things are to be rigorously attended to in order to secure sound bodily health. They are these: CLEANLINESS, CLOTHING, FOOD, EXERCISE (under which head I include some occupation, industry, or pursuit), SLEEP, and MARRIAGE.

Some persons never bathe but once a week, if even so often; others do not perform the most ordinary daily demands of nature, but at intervals of several days. Now the neglect of these and others of the rules of health which I shall presently point out, are sinful. They amount to a flagrant defiance of our Maker's laws made in our behalf.

Let it be first observed that the skin, which envelopes the human body, is a network of a very fine fabric, requiring particular and daily care, as it is exposed to all the changes of heat and cold. It performs the part of a safety-valve of the constitution, and it is continually throwing off from its numerous pores small particles of vapour, more or less heated: so long as this process is performed in a proper manner the pores are kept open, and a healthy state of the system is maintained; but so sure as the pores have become obstructed, then commence discomfort and sickness. The individual is attacked with pain in

one way or another; either he is seized with an ordinary cold, or with lumbago, or rheumatism, or with diarrhœa. These and other several signs of suffering, as the case may be, soon show themselves, and it is best for us that they do so appear. They are warnings for us to profit by. The cause, then, of much sickness being the imperfect condition of the skin, our business plainly is to take measures to prevent this imperfection or obstruction. We must always maintain the skin in a working condition; this is best done by washing the body daily. The first act after rising should be devoted to this cleanly, wholesome practice. A sponge, a few towels, and a basin of water more or less warm according to the degree of coldness of the weather, are all that are absolutely necessary. Those who have the means may of course luxuriate in a bath of the amplest proportions, but to the multitude these few articles are all that are necessary. The body once washed all over should be well rubbed with towels until it is perfectly dry. Flannel and other necessary clothing being put on in a degree proportioned to the heat or coldness of the day. The skin is by these means preserved in a condition suitable to withstand the attacks made upon it, whether from without or from the impurities which gather daily on its surface, and which amount, if neglected, to an extraordinary

quantity. It is lamentable to think that there are myriads of people who do not know the value of this simple law in respect to their skin. They concern themselves about garments of silk and satin, but ignore the care of that wonderful texture with which our Maker has supplied them. Twenty-five minutes each morning are all that is required to perform so useful a task as the care of the skin. The certainty, soon or late, of sickness, resulting from the neglect of this important duty is infallible, while the good to be derived from the attention to this most simple of duties is invaluable.

To such an extent is the skin a safety-valve, that the effects of the most malignant poisons have been carried off through copious perspiration.

Attention should be bestowed upon the temperature of the water in which we bathe, for if the pores of the skin are closed, the flow of perspiration is stopped. Some people do their best to stop it by taking ice-cold baths. They think the performance manly, and though they suffer for it, they overlook the frequent ill-consequences. If the normal heat of the blood is 98°, why should we strive to apply water of the temperature of 32° to the system, and thus incur the risk of endangering our health? It is not every one who has vitality sufficient to stand immersion in cold water.

When it is considered that the air is full of unseen

matter, minute invisible organisms, animal life which settle on the human frame, we cannot be too careful to protect ourselves against the continual invasion of impurities, which, whether in the form of life or as small particles of dust, are quite sufficient to stop, if neglected, the pores in that wonderful network with which we are so skilfully enclosed.

There is a physical relationship between the body and the atmosphere around us. Unless the first is in harmony with the last, it becomes disordered: they must be *en rapport* with each other; if not, the body more readily becomes the prey of disease.

Magnetism, electricity, heat, and light—phenomena intimately related to each other and proceeding from one and the same power—these are elements which should be greatly valued, for they enter largely in the prosecution of any scheme having for its object the preservation of our health. All physical life depends more or less on their possession. Our bodies should therefore be at all times in a fit condition to receive or imbibe, as it were, these invaluable forces. And this state can only be arrived at perfectly by cleanliness. The daily preparation of the body to absorb these important aids to health should be regarded as a duty of the first importance. Receiving these elements, we place ourselves in harmony with every atmospheric

change around us. We are not found complaining of either the severity of the cold, or the intensity of the heat. The abundant rains and the long drought are regarded with complacency, for we are prepared to enjoy the benefits which each and all these changes are calculated to produce.

The next point to consider is our CLOTHING. The body should always be protected by a proper quantity of clothing. Too much, or too little, is equally objectionable. According to the heat or cold of the weather as shown by a thermometer, so ought to be the amount of our clothing. As sure as we feel chilly, we are submitting ourselves to a wrong. We commence to break that physical law which requires us to preserve the skin in a working state; for cold contracts the pores of our skin, and this contraction is the sure cause of the colds and other more dangerous maladies which carry thousands annually to a premature grave. It is a wise precaution to carry an overcoat on the arm to use in case of necessity. The heat of the body should never be allowed to sink below 98° Fahrenheit.

The thinness of the skin shows that it is not to be trusted to for protection. It is not a sufficient shield to keep us safe from the changes of weather. Man must look to that intelligence which has been given him. That force is continually to be exercised to pro-

cure his safety in this as in other situations of life. He has constantly to rely on the watchfulness of his intellect to keep him safe. A few minutes of forgetfulness or neglect to preserve himself from exposure to cold, is sufficient to plunge him into illness. The heat of the body is a property wherein is life, and it must be carefully kept up. Many a person who has been physically adapted to live to a good old age, because he took cold on such a day has died prematurely. "It was only a cold," people say. When will they learn that a cold is the foundation of numerous diseases which are apt to end fatally?

When the skin is out of order, from cold or any other cause, the nervous system, a very important part of animal organisation, becomes deranged. And when that happens, other functions of the body cease to work as they ought. It is important that the nerves should be preserved in their normal state of elasticity and power, otherwise the human system ceases to benefit by the electric currents of the atmosphere. We know how susceptible our frame is to electric shocks and to mesmeric passes, and we can imagine the loss to it in nerve power when deprived of electrical influence.

If our Maker did not require us to study the changes of the weather and clothe ourselves according to these changes, He would have given us a stouter skin

than we possess. He would have furnished us possibly with a hide like that of the ox; but having provided us with what is far better than this—a mind—He requires us to exercise this great faculty continually to our advantage, whether in regard to the temperature of the weather, or to the many other circumstances of life. Our minds should ever be active, quick, and ready to observe all around us, governing and controlling the body in all its ways and habits.

The adjustment of our clothing, so as to meet the necessities of temperature, is all-important. Excess may occur in the quantity of our attire just as in that of our food, and the consequences are almost equally deplorable. Too much clothing is like too much eating—it engenders excessive heat in the system.

Of equal, if not of greater, importance is the supply of FOOD with which we should nourish the body. We indulge in larger quantities of food and drink than we ought. Disease is consequently generated within us. We have contrived for ourselves numberless dishes and hundreds of kinds of drink to tempt the weary palate and to gratify unduly our animal faculties. We cultivate a low, debasing, and too frequently a health-destroying pursuit. Cookery is an art, which while it should obtain an expression of our acknowledgments for introducing to us improved methods of treating the

articles of food intended for our tables, yet should have its limits on our attention. The luxuries of the table too frequently cause us to overload our stomachs, and the consequences of such excess are too familiar to need recapitulation here.

Our meals should be taken three times a day, at about the hours of eight, one, and six, and our drink should be confined to the same occasions. It is impossible to specify exactly the quantity any given person should eat, as much will depend upon the nature of the work engaged upon. The open air sharpens the appetite greatly, and where the labour is exhaustive more may be safely taken; but for breakfast the meal for a healthy man may be a quantity equal to two eggs, a slice of bacon, and a good slice of bread, with a pint of tea or coffee. For lunch, meat in quantity about the size of a mutton chop, with bread weighing a few oz. For dinner, meat in quantity about the same as, or rather more than, the meal preceding, with vegetables, cheese, and fruit. About a pint and a half of ale or of water should suffice for both these meals.

We should have sufficient moral discipline to restrain ourselves when other opportunities are presented of eating and drinking; otherwise the consequence will assuredly be that, being overfed, disease will be

contracted in the body, and will show itself soon or late. Besides, eating and drinking are animal performances, and the animal in us should be controlled as much as possible, in order that the superior part of our nature, the spiritual, should be cultivated.

Beware how you eat and drink, fattening and indulging your bodies to the injury of your minds. Look at the fat pigs at your cattle-shows, and see how they are deprived, by excess of feeding, of their natural sight and other instincts. In like manner unless we keep in constant view the importance of restraining our animal propensities, our perceptive faculties will become dull. We should eat such things as can easily be digested. Some persons venture to eat all sorts of meats. Everything seems to assimilate with their constitutions; but it is not so with all. It is well if we can digest our food with perfect comfort. A dish of vegetables should, when necessary, follow our meat at dinner. It should be taken if the bowels require to be assisted in their work. Vegetables, and not medicine, should be relied on and trusted to, in order to regulate this important part of the human machine. Its daily performance should be as regular, easy, and simple as it is possible to be. There should be no straining nor violence. Wherever such is the case, there will follow piles and other dreadful diseases.

Parents ought carefully to examine the condition of the young in this particular, explaining to them the object to be gained by a regular discharge of the function.

There should be no eating to excess. No experience of dulness, nor stupidity after meals. No sensation of sleep, no encroachments on the domains of reason—if any of these symptoms appear, injury is done to the mind, to say nothing of the body. But while there should be no overfeeding, neither should there be any underfeeding, or starvation. There is such a thing as an exact quantity of food which the system requires for its support, and this quantity is regulated according to the demand made upon the system. The stomach should be moderately filled, otherwise it cannot well perform its functions; while to fill it too much disturbs its operations. A mixture of food is best. Sameness does not offer that stimulus to the appetite which is desirable. There is no need for asceticism; but there is such a thing as to know what our animal requirements really are, and to gratify them only to the necessary extent. The weather, the amount of exercise, or the labour, mental or bodily, we have gone through during the day, are circumstances which will vary the quantity of our meal. In no case should we permit ourselves to take so much as to bring on any thing like discomfort, repletion, or a stupid, confused state of

mind. A difficulty in the enjoyment of reading is a symptom of having indulged the appetite to a greater degree than it should have been. Children and young people, while they are growing, require more food than adults, but even the young should be taught to control their appetites.

Over eating is more injurious than over drinking. The human machine has a greater work to do when it has to reduce and assimilate a larger quantity of food, than is necessary for the maintenance of a proper degree of health. To drink freely is decidedly injurious, especially to the moral part of our nature; but to eat overmuch is more objectionable, though not so discreditable an act in society.

The more simple the beverage we take with our meals the better. Water, milk, tea, coffee, cocoa, are all excellent in their way. If beer or wine is to be indulged in, it should be taken in small quantities, and should consist of those kinds which are freest from spirit or alcohol. This poison, taken at first in small quantities, insinuates itself by exhilarating the frame. It acts on the animal part of us to such a degree as soon to deaden the finer perceptions of the mind. We are thereby made unfit to control the animal passions. Instead of ridding ourselves of these, we encourage and preserve them by further libations. Wine and water

mixed is a more appropriate drink than wine alone. The object of drink is to quench the thirst ; this cannot be done satisfactorily with wine. Too much of it must be taken for this purpose, and the health is injured in consequence.

A reasonable amount of Exercise in the open air is necessary for the maintenance and cultivation of our health and strength. The young can safely take a larger quantity than adults ; but all persons, whatever their age, should take some bodily exercise daily, varying it according to the measure of their strength and occupation. Walking is far preferable to other modes, and is more in accordance with our Maker's design, as we may judge by the human form.

Industry is a great motive power to preserve health. All nature declares this. The sea itself, were its waters not moved by tides nor lashed by storms, would fail in freshness. And the air, were it inactive and still, would soon be unfit for us to breathe and live in. The water of the ponds and lakes of our fields, unless they are kept moving or replenished, soon become corrupt. In like manner the health of man is preserved by motion of body and mind. The employment of some portion of time each day in labour of some sort, according to our special fitness or qualifications, is necessary. The agriculturist who tills the

soil; the merchant who distributes the produce of that soil, either in the country or abroad and takes in exchange other goods; the mariner busy in carrying it from one port to another at great peril over tempestuous seas; the builder occupied in the erection of habitations for his fellowmen; the miner going down into the earth in search of precious metals; and innumerable others busy in various ways in contributing to the advancement, preservation, and comfort of mankind in the daily production of numerous articles which contribute to that end; all these do well, for all employ their mind and their body in work. They fulfil a law which tends to keep them in health. As activity enlivens the mind and keeps it keen, quick and intelligent, so inactivity, or idleness, soon impoverishes both mind and body. Of course, there is such a thing as too much work for the body as well as too much employment for the mind. Moderation in this, as in all things, is the best. Neither body nor mind should be exposed to too great a strain.

A people devoted to too many holidays and festivals can never become a leading people. A certain amount of industry daily exercised is the life of a nation. Its best prosperity consists in its industry. While this flourishes all may be well; but when this languishes then decay sets in.

If the rules above prescribed for our diet, clothing, and exercise have been observed our SLEEP will be good. We shall be refreshed and strengthened by it; but if we have, for instance, been immoderate or excessive in our diet it will be disturbed, and we shall not obtain that strength and refreshment which a state of complete repose was designed to afford us. Early hours for retirement to rest are essential to the maintenance of good health. Many sound constitutions are broken up by late hours and frequent attendance at entertainments, where the excitement is destructive of that complete rest so necessary for the refreshment and restoration of the body. It is important to observe that the quantity of bed-clothing should neither be excessive nor too light. The same careful observation is necessary here as in every step of life. All our journey is one of discipline. The mind should be continually on the alert to observe what the body is about. We are ever tending either towards our improvement or our deterioration both physically and morally, for our two natures are remarkably blended together.

MARRIAGE is another most important consideration. Without it our improvement and happiness cannot be complete. The relationship of the sexes is of so grave a character that it cannot be set aside with

impunity. Unhappily for mankind the Church has on some occasions caused a wavering in the path of duty, by blessing a state of celibacy, thus giving a sanction to a condition involving much perplexity and ruin to health. To defy the law which requires the union of the sexes is to reap an abundant harvest of crime, disease, and death. Better a thousand times that the wretched contrivances of selfishness, whether of the Church or of the family, were removed and consigned to everlasting oblivion, than that adults, men and women, should be encouraged to lead lives totally subversive of health, and opposed to the fundamental laws of our Maker. If the frightful penalties which are inflicted on us, by the disregard of this great law of our nature were unknown or unseen, there might be some excuse for us; but they blaze before our eyes even with the force of a noonday's sun. The blind alone, or those who will not see, fail to estimate the ruin worked in our race by the neglect of marriage. While the latter estate is the condition of life which all adults should seek, those who are looking forward to it and waiting until they are prepared by circumstances to enter upon it, should be careful as to their diet. They should discipline and control their appetites for food and drink. They should take only a moderate amount, so that they may keep down their

animal propensities, and so preserve their chastity. This control of the appetite will prove invaluable to their future welfare.

Some people assert that marriage should not be entered upon unless one is able to maintain a certain position in life. You incur, they say, a great responsibility. You will have children whom you will not be able to bring up respectably, and to whom you cannot give a suitable education. Your life will be one of difficulty, you will enjoy nothing of comfort and independence. Your wife will become a household drudge, a mere servant, and, finally, you will break down in ruin.

Such arguments make marriage to be a luxury, a thing not at all necessary to health and morals. Whereas the contrary is the truth. If these reasoners would cease to support their false and conventional theories of position and respectability, they would be doing something to root up the corruption which is destroying the core of society. They would learn that the real criterion of man's respectability does not consist in having a large income, and house, and rank, and influence, and position, but is found in understanding and following the rules of his Maker—rules which observed, maintain him and his family in health, comfort, and happiness, so long as they live

in this world, and which fit him and them to become inhabitants of that world to which as spiritual beings they are going. If we would look to the essentials of life we should find that on £100 a year, an industrious family might be supported with comfort. That philosophy is bad whose principles will not apply to the condition of the mass of mankind. It is a poor theory which teaches that marriage is only to be enjoyed by the rich. If such were true, then civilisation may be pronounced a failure. We had better renounce it and return to savage life. But it is not so. If we strike off all the artificial wants with which we have unhappily surrounded ourselves, and adhere to the requirements of nature, we shall find ourselves not far off from a condition which will enable us to lay claim to a considerable share of substantial happiness. It is our ignorance which stands in the way of our enjoyment of the realities of life. Like savages, we have not forgot to decorate ourselves with trinkets of gold and other useless things. Is health secured to the body? That should be our chief consideration in dress, diet, and in our homes. All our spare thoughts should be devoted with earnestness to the cultivation of the spirit. Adorn that as much as we will we cannot do wrong. Polish it in the highest degree with the graces of life. Let charity, love, patience,

forbearance, truth, sincerity, gentleness, goodness, become ours. These things cost nothing; yet they are among the essentials of our existence. It matters not if we inhabit a humble cottage, we may contemplate with pride the vast extent of the dominions of our Spiritual Father, who alone is the possessor of all. We may further remember that we take nothing with us when we quit our bodily tenements, unless it be those qualities of the spirit which we have cultivated and made our own while on earth. These are the possessions which we should continually strive to obtain; all the while doing justice to the requirements of the body committed to our care. We should know that to succeed in the preservation of our physical and spiritual health, is to accomplish our chief duty to our Maker in this life, to fit ourselves for the work which He may have in reserve for us in that spiritual life to come.

In marriage, the best affections of our nature are satisfied. Surrounded by the family it is in its bosom that we learn some of the greatest sweets of existence, as well as the best lessons of life, love, patience, forbearance, self-control, humility, and other virtues.

Marriage might be limited to the robust and healthy. On them, and not on the weak, should devolve the

responsibility of bringing up children. There would then be fewer instances of premature death, and consequently less suffering and misery.

Marriage is the most honourable of all conditions, at the same time that it is one which eminently promotes the health and purity of our lives and affections. Every adult person should enter this state, unless disease, weakness, or some exceptional impediment occur to prevent it. It is perfectly right and good that there should exist this community of the sexes. And there is nothing whatever degrading in the idea, as some churchmen affect. That the sexual intercourse of man and wife should be condemned by Catholic moralists as a concession to human weakness, can well be conceived of a priesthood pledged to celibacy; but it is only one among many instances of imperfect instruction issuing from minds whose judgments have been rendered weak and perverse through the adoption of doctrines fundamentally false, unnatural, and not in harmony with the plans of our Maker. That is indeed human weakness which opposes the designs of the Almighty, and that is indeed real human grandeur which conforms to His will. It is a hollow and monkish sentimentality which attempts to decry the virtue of marriage, for it is through marriage that the tenderest affections spring up and are gratified. The

pure feelings of man and wife, of parent and child, where are any such to be found, except in the bosom of well-regulated families?

The first duty of young men, as well as of young women, should be to prepare themselves by a correct cultivation of industrious and other virtuous practice for the married state. This should be entered upon by men about the age of twenty-five, and by women a few years earlier.

If they happen to have more children than they are able to support, provision for such children should be found by the state, until they are of an age to earn their own livelihood. Better a thousand times that the community should feed and instruct such children in the ways of virtue, than entertain, as it has to do, paupers, to say nothing of a large criminal population, the two costing together something like £14,000,000 a year.

The predictions of Malthus in respect to the evils arising from over population need scarcely be dreaded. The earth will not for many centuries to come be fully peopled even at the present rate of increase. To disregard the most obvious laws of our Maker, and to set up theories of our own, is simply to propose the deposition of the Great Legislator who made us. So long as man continues the animal he is, so long will it be

necessary for him to marry; but when mankind become more righteous, when they study spirituality for its own sake, their inclinations and pursuits will be very different, and their number under such altered circumstances will not increase so rapidly. If we primarily made spiritual blessings the grand ambition, physical objects would cease to have such a tight hold upon us.

The foregoing are very plain directions for obtaining and preserving physical health. They are so simple that everyone it may be said can understand them, and there are few, it is hoped, who are unwilling to admit their efficacy. To observe them is to secure the blessings of health, but like all other of our relations with our Maker, they must be strictly carried out. A partial observance of the rules will not answer. They must be followed out in every particular. In all the dealings of our Maker with man simplicity will be found the chief characteristic. It is a proof of His goodness that it should be thus. How could a Benefactor like Him require us to discriminate among the intricate contrivances which the ingenuity and cunning of men have devised? These serve but to confound and perplex, whereas in matters so essential to our well-being the way designed by Him is perfectly plain and easy to comprehend. It is for us to

follow in it. The course of safety is so plain that no excuse is permitted for any diversion from it. The penalties of ill-health, sickness, disease, as well as premature death, are all according to proportion attached to any departure from the line of duty.

The reasonableness of these rules will, it is hoped, recommend them to the adoption of all sensible people. Parents and heads of schools should impress them upon the young under their charge.

This instruction in the way of health will be found on examination perfectly harmless in its character. Based upon sound rules, it cannot fail to do good. It demands of us a certain amount of discipline which, if practised, will become of inestimable value. Even if the sick were to place themselves under the operation of these laws they would experience great benefit.

By the possessor of good health, and to him who knows how to keep it, and puts his knowledge in practice, all weather is received with satisfaction. He does not feel the effects of change as others do, and he is not found suffering and complaining, as the rain, the fog, the cold, the damp succeed one another, but he takes them as they present themselves. Strengthened and preserved by the rules which our Maker has made for the protection of health, he feels himself to be continually protected, and he goes forward to his daily

duties, of whatsoever nature, with delight, and with a reliance on his Maker's will. He has acquired strong faith in these rules. He sees all their force, knows all their value experimentally, and, rejoicing in their simplicity and truthfulness, he is firm in his strict adherence to them; and if, perchance, he neglect or break any of them, he immediately recognises the penalty of his offence in the suffering which follows.

All sickness and disease are curable, unless they have gone too far to admit of recovery, if brought under the laws which govern health. Drugs are not essential to effect cures—indeed they often create other diseases, and hasten death, which might have been averted.

The success of homœopathists and the still larger success of hydropathists, are owing doubtless to the little use of drugs. And the time is not distant when the allopathist will discover and admit that it is not medicine which effects cures, but rather that diet and nursing are mainly the cause. And as he now laughs at the superstitious practices of the physicians of old, he will smile at the equally absurd reliance placed on the immense and varied quantities of pills and powders needlessly shot down the throats of a too credulous public.

Our Maker as much permits ill-health as He does

evil. Disease is no less averse from His dispensations than sin. The one arises from the neglect of His physical laws, the other from defiance of His moral laws. We can command the possession of health, and we can abstain, if we will, from evil. Indeed we can much more readily and perfectly maintain a course of moral rectitude, after we have learnt the manner of preserving bodily health, than we can without it. Both the one and the other can only be maintained by exercise, or, in other words, by cultivation.

Health is preserved so long as the body is cultivated. It has a discipline to undergo which must be attended to according to rules. As surely as these are neglected, the normal condition is affected, and disease appears. It is often communicated by parents and others infected with contagious disorders. And this liability to which we are exposed is designed to teach us of the intimate relationship existing among all classes of the human family; and the necessity there is of considering the welfare of the race at large, and not our individual well-being alone, as the true and lasting basis of action towards improvement, happiness, and perfectibility.

Disease from contact or otherwise most easily overtakes those whose bodies are prepared to receive it by the non-observance or neglect of the rules of health.

Whereas they who observe the laws of health and of morals, will at all times be found in a state successfully to resist the attacks of disease and of other evils.

The laws relating to health are so simple and natural when once understood and appreciated that I have known people to whom I have given them, glide so insensibly into them as not to feel that they had ever lived without their pale. These persons had been full of suffering previously. They speedily became well, and as speedily forgot the means through its very simplicity. There had been no violent efforts experienced in their restoration, no strong doses of medicine. Nothing to alarm—nothing to remember.

The individual who carries out these rules has ceased to be an animal only. He has established a controlling power within him of the highest value. He ranks among spiritual beings. He has become capable of great things. He has learnt to trace the intentions of the Great Maker. If we can thus discover the operation of His mind in these particulars, we should religiously hold by the rules, just as if He were present addressing us with His own voice, for it is not by speech, but by work that He aids us. He wishes us to follow Him in His work, for by this way alone shall we improve our minds to that degree of improvement which He requires us to attain.

Although our spiritual nature is so very superior to our physical nature, yet there is no reason for us to despise the latter as something impure. Nothing is impure which our Creator has made. It is only our distorting, misapplying things from their proper uses that creates evil and impurity. If we would cease to mix and confuse His rules with our own crude ideas, there would reign within us all that is pure and good. By meddling with the course of the stream of goodness which He has provided, we too often cause stagnation and impurity.

All the requirements of the body should be carefully attended to. Every faculty should be duly administered to; not by the crushing or destruction of any, as in the times of monasticism, but by a healthy cultivation of all. The beauty and perfection of our physical frame should be kept in view. We should remember that every excess or error in every departure from the rules of health, will tell against that perfection which we should all seek. Excess in eating or drinking, or in any other animal gratification, impairs our judgment, and prevents us from obtaining that calm, equable frame of mind which is so necessary for the cultivation and attainment of the highest kind of social virtues. And, what is true of ourselves also relates to our offspring. In a general way they inherit

our defects, whether of constitution or of character, whether of body or of mind. And as they inherit our defects, in like manner they inherit the good points which belong to us.

There is no necessity for invalids to repair to distant mineral springs, or to other expensive remedies. Some travel hundreds of miles to seek a cure of their afflictions. The outlay attendant on such a journey makes it altogether out of the power of the poor to obtain such remedies. This of itself, to my mind, is sufficient to show that it is not necessary to go to such places. The remedy would only be within the means or reach of the wealthy, whereas the design of the Maker in relation to health applies to all. Let the poor take comfort. The regulations of the Maker in respect to health do not require such far-sought remedies. Ample means are within the reach of all. Your own homes, however humble, are capable of affording you all that is necessary. The bountiful Disposer of all has put the greater efficacy in things most abundant, and which may be obtained without cost.

There is perhaps no country in the world where the climate is more variable or more trying than that of England. There is no place where the changes of temperature are so sudden and so great. The intervals between fine and foul weather, warm and cold, are

very brief, and the consequent effect on the human constitution is very remarkable. Yet, owing to the knowledge of the rules of health, and the obedience I manifest to them, I escape all illness. I am never an invalid. I am not a native of these isles. I was born in the East Indies, and never visited Europe until I was upwards of thirty years of age—I am now fifty-seven. I have only a moderately good constitution, and yet I am never ill. How is this? There must be some good reason for it. Why am I confident that no illness will overtake me? Why do I live, as regards health, in a condition of perfect security? I say it not in a boastful spirit, but in all humility, when I answer it is because I strictly adhere to our bountiful Maker's rules of health.

The method here given is one I have pursued for many years past with the best results. It is a method which on examination will be found perfectly harmless in its character. Based upon sound rules, it cannot fail to do good. It demands a certain attention to discipline, which, if observed, has great value. If the healthy follow this plan they need not fear the approach of disease. If those afflicted with disease adopt it, I confidently predict for them much benefit, if not perfect recovery.

CHAPTER V.

HEALTH OF SOUL.

It has been shown that the attainment of physical health depends upon the legitimate exercise of our bodily functions. These functions are, comparatively, so few in number and so open to the experience and observation of all, that it was possible to prescribe, for their regulation, a small code of general rules, which there is no difficulty in extending to particular cases. But it is different with respect to the soul. So infinite is the extent, so incalculable the number of its powers and capacities, and so diverse are these in both kind and degree, that to prescribe rules for the government of our spiritual functions is a task impossible to carry out in anything like an exhaustive manner. I am, therefore, compelled to deal with the soul after a more general and less precise fashion than that which I ventured to adopt in treating of the body. The same fundamental principle, however, is equally applicable to both. Health, whether of body or of soul, is to be

attained only by the exercise of their respective faculties, according to those laws which their Creator has himself indicated for their guidance.

The miseries of mankind are of two kinds, physical and moral. The first we see exhibited in the various diseases to which man is subject, and the last is seen in the crimes which he commits. All these evils of both classes are the products of ignorance. Man is entirely the author of them, and man can rid himself of them only by adopting the means which his Maker has placed within his reach for that very purpose. Formed by his Maker a free agent, endowed with a mind having attributes corresponding in kind with those of his Maker, that Maker looks to man for the proper government of himself, primarily, and of the world in which he lives, generally. Gifted with reason and with the knowledge of right and wrong, he is placed at the head of creation. He is made a rational creature with powers of observation and study sufficient to examine, and act out, the plans of the august and beneficent Maker of all things. To know these plans then is the first duty of mankind. For it is very evident that the Creator, when He formed man, must have devised a way for him which, if he followed, must lead on to Happiness. It cannot be otherwise; for to suppose that there is no right way, no plan in

the Divine mind with respect to man, is to suppose that God has created a machine without any laws for its sound guidance and regulation. Such an idea cannot for a moment be entertained with respect to an all-perfect, provident Being like the Almighty. To place man in the world without means to obtain a knowledge of his proper course, is like sending a ship to sea without a rudder or a chart. It would be unlikely that such a vessel would ever reach a haven. And so it would invariably be with mankind, unless some settled plan were provided by the Divine mind; and power to carry it out given to man. Our Maker has unquestionably provided such a plan, and man has the means of following it out, so as to protect him from misery and to ensure him happiness.

The mind of man does not practically hold that place in our estimation which it should rightly possess. Incomparably superior as it is to the body, yet all our care and attention is, in the first place, bestowed upon the latter. We do all we can to surround the bodily frame with fine things, rich clothes, wealth, rank, titles—to nourish it with meats and drinks innumerable; but how little do we care about the mind or spirit. We too often make it the slave of the body, inasmuch as it is driven hither and thither, by fair ways and foul, to obtain such things as gratify the

passions of the body. This indulgence of the body in all its desires, to the neglect of the spirit, has a most unhappy tendency. It makes us little better than the animals which surround us, creatures whom our Maker has not blessed with a spirit like that which He has placed in us.

This immeasurable superiority of the spirit over the body is a matter which cannot be too strongly insisted on. The body is given to the spirit that the latter may inhabit the earth : not the spirit to the body. The body is the tenement of the spirit while here. It is but the clay which surrounds the spirit, and like all other clay will one day return to the bosom of its parent Earth. But the spirit lives for ever.

Our spirit then should understand its right place; it should not degenerate and degrade itself by being absorbed with matters which purely belong to the body ; but it should rightly comprehend its situation as a being intended to represent the Great Spirit, whose work it is called upon to prosecute on earth, to move among the spirits of our fellow-men, telling them of the Great Maker and of His works, and His desire that we should love to do good to one another.

It is by preserving the spirit in its right place as master of the body, by cultivating it, that we can really do the most for the benefit of the body. For it

is only when our mind has been exercised in a proper degree that we understand all that is good for the protection of the body as well as of itself.

Mind-power then is what we most want, and what we must have. We must seek it with all our might. It is the power which created all things, and which preserves the universe from falling into chaos. It is the power which governs all things by its laws. If we know these laws, and are obedient to them ; that is, if we follow them out in our lives, and pursue them in their integrity, we are in harmony with this power. If we oppose, or run contrary to, these laws, we are soon crushed and reduced to ruin.

Mind-power, where it really exists, is everlasting. It is here for awhile, and then returns to that Being who gave it. Its germ is found in all men, but unless it is cultivated it becomes scarcely perceptible. It is only by its development that we can understand our place on earth, or have a glimpse of our future after this life is over. By a proper use of this power, we rise to the full stature and dignity of man. By ignoring this power, we fall beneath our high position and privileges. We become absorbed in the animal part of our nature. We are beset with all manner of doubts and fears. We live in a world of illusions, the result of our own creation. The perfection of this power

in man is first discoverable when it can control the animal power in him. Then it is that man may be said really to live, to have an individuality of his own. Then it is that he practically knows truth from error, good from evil. Then we perceive things unseen. By familiarity with the unseen we are led to perceive the Great Unseen. We begin to look up to and know the Great Unknown. We are guided by His laws in all our journey. We walk as it were with the Great Maker of all things. We recognise him. Seeing the beauty of His ways, we learn to love Him.

Ideas are the food of the mind. Let us then be cautious as to the nature of the ideas which we store up for its maintenance, taking care that they are not opposed to our highest and best interests here and hereafter.

Words are expressive of ideas; and ideas, according to their nature or force, have a certain effect on our minds tending either to its comfort and happiness, or otherwise. There is a power in each idea. It brings into play one of our faculties; it creates, excites, expands within us certain emotions and aims. It operates in us either to our well-being or to our injury. According as we sow we reap.

Now, as happiness is the goal at which we aim, it is necessary to cultivate ideas which are likely to promote

this, and to avoid all such as will do us harm or evil. Just as we make a selection of meats and drinks for the body, so we should be careful to avoid the entertainment of every dangerous or offensive idea into our minds. Society, as now constituted, ignores this fact. Preachers will be heard talking of war, revenge, &c., when nothing but peace and good-will should fall from their lips. As love and peace should prevail everywhere, so our language and our intercourse at all times should consist of words which are calculated to produce these feelings in our minds and in those of others. There are words which produce such effects, and there are others which produce very opposite ones. Good words bind and knit hearts together in friendship and affection, while again there are other words of a repellent character. Every one who has any knowledge of language can readily discern the difference. The Great Spirit, the Author of the moral world, as He is the Creator of the universe, has for our improvement placed before us two great classes of ideas, the one good and the other bad, and He requires us to choose between them. Unless our minds are exercised in this, as well as in other ways of discrimination, they will become very deficient in intellectual acumen and power. The duty, the obligation on us, to examine carefully all we think and do is imperative; for attached to it, on the one hand, is so

heavy a penalty as evil, while on the other is held out so great a reward as our security and happiness. Those who have so far governed themselves, as at all times to employ language consistent with the promotion of peace and good-will, become so educated, that they cease to be exposed to the trouble and discomfort which others experience on the most ordinary occasions.

A person so trained is ever looking at all the incidents of life, whether in himself or in others, as he does on all other of the phenomena of nature around him, with calmness, dispassionately reviewing all things and events as they occur.

Such a person, if assailed by a fellow-creature with abuse, abstains from recrimination. He regards such weapons as beneath him, and draws from the armoury of his mind some of the sweet and excellent words with which he is abundantly provided. The rude and the ignorant are ofttimes more readily overcome by a display of genuine kindness, than by the exercise of strength, however superior to their own.

The Jews certainly declared a great and universal fact when they stated that "he that keepeth the laws of the Eternal, happy is he." They thoroughly believed in the Eternal, and they knew that the Eternal had given them laws; but, unfortunately,

their knowledge of these laws is mixed up with much that is obscure and worthless.

Moses, in the midst of an idolatrous people, took hold of the idea of the existence of the Eternal; the Almighty Maker who, though unseen to the sense, must be worshipped by the soul. And he proclaimed this grandest of all truths in the most striking manner in which he was capable, adding, at the same time, certain commandments as from God. In the midst of the darkness which surrounded him, Moses evidently perceived that there was an intelligent Being who had laws which should be obeyed. What those laws were he did not clearly see, though he comprehended something of them. The channel into which his mind commenced to travel was evidently right, and it had been well for humanity if that channel had been deepened by observation and experience. But he dwelt in the midst of an ignorant people. He had scarcely made known his great discovery when some of the chief men, wishing for a visible deity, made a calf of gold, and set it up for worship.

Again, there can be no question as to the truth of this other phrase of the Hebrews—"In the way of righteousness there is life." While there is obvious force in the statement, yet we require more than such generalities to guide us. Nor is it enough to say, "In

the fear of the Eternal is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding." Nor yet does it suffice to add, "Trust in the Eternal with all thine heart, and it shall be well with thee."

The Hebrews had very confused notions of that which the Eternal required of them. They did not read his character aright. They placed Him before them as a Being to be dreaded; as one who was jealous of His honour. They pictured the Almighty as one who took vengeance upon man. They were constantly making him share in their battles. Their notions were eminently inconsistent and contradictory. Instead of cultivating a life of righteousness, which would include a life of gentleness and peace, they were ever at war with their neighbours. Not satisfied with the territories which they possessed, they continually coveted the lands of those around them. If they had sincerely held fast to their doctrines respecting righteousness, the chances are that they would have been liked and respected by the surrounding nations.

Some chief topics of the earlier Mosaic books are, as we all know,—the creation of the world; the garden of Eden; the tree of knowledge *forbidden;* the fall of man by the temptation of a serpent; the plurality of wives; the ages of the patriarchs; the deluge and the

ark; the promise of the benevolent God not to curse the earth again; the rainbow appointed as the sign of God's covenant with man; the Tower of Babel; Abraham entertaining angels; God tempting Abraham to slay his only son; Jacob wrestling with God, who, when he could not prevail over Jacob, touched the hollow of his thigh, so that his sinew shrank;—these few of the episodes from *Genesis* and *Exodus* are chiefly remarkable for the many interviews between God and Moses, and the latter's proceedings thereafter. Moses's intercessions with Pharaoh to permit the Israelites to leave Egypt, are accompanied by many awful visitations, such as the great River Nile being turned into blood; frogs covering the land of Egypt and the waters also; the dust becoming filled with lice; the plague of boils; the murrain among cattle; the locust plague; and other equally astonishing miracles.

Now, when I am asked to put faith in all these statements, I object on the ground that I cannot believe that our adorable Maker ever delights in harming His creatures in any way. It is they who through ignorance hurt and injure themselves. Moreover, if he wished to help the Israelites to obtain their freedom, he would not waste so much time and useless effort in the alleged performance of so many miracu-

lous doings, whereby Pharaoh is made to appear a wonderful personage for having so successfully, and for so long a period, withstood the schemes of Jehovah!

Rather I should have thought that one miraculous interposition would have been enough; that, for instance, which was last resorted to; namely, the flight and passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea.

Bad as is the effect on the mind of the student, of all this alleged contest between Jehovah and Pharaoh, it is even heightened and made worse when we are told that the Lord advised Moses to get the departing Israelites "to borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver and jewels of gold"—so that the Israelites should not leave empty-handed. They committed this grand fraud, abusing in a signal manner the confidence of their friends and neighbours, for who but friends would trust one another with jewellery?

Leviticus is full of ceremonial laws, sacrifices of meats, and other things.

Numbers relates the numbering of the people and other matters of small importance, besides the murmurings of the Israelites. The supply of manna, and the feast of quails. The earth swallowing up Korah

and his company because they had provoked the Lord.

Deuteronomy tells of the journeys and conquests of the Israelites. The publication of the Ten Commandments. Communion with other nations forbidden for fear of idolatry. A list of meats, clean and unclean, and other things.

Joshua is mainly a record of the achievements of a great fighting captain. Successes like his over other nations may be very magnificent; but the less we have presented to us of such examples, and the less we are told of God taking part in such iniquity as battles, the better for mankind.

In *Judges* there is more fighting, and the history of Samson. The Books of *Samuel* are also full of accounts of battles. The first chapter of the first Book of Kings opens with a keen bit of satire which the servants of King David might have spared him. Of great age and nearing the period of his death, when the mind and soul of a good man should be spiritually occupied, the King's servants, aware of their master's tastes, prescribed for him medical treatment of an unique description.

This may be a truthful incident of history, but it is bad instruction. We are elsewhere taught that the King was a man after God's own heart—a proposition

which is scarcely established by the records of his life and practice.

Solomon next appears on the scene with his wisdom, his wealth, his seven hundred wives, and his three hundred concubines. Elijah the Tishbite is fed by ravens; and he raises a widow's son to life. He takes leave of Elisha, and dividing the waters of the river Jordan with his mantle, he is carried up to heaven in a chariot of fire. Elisha takes up the fallen mantle of the ascended prophet, and he also performs miracles.

Passing by some of the minor Books, we reach the Book of Job, the Psalms, the Proverbs, and the Book of Ecclesiastes. In these there is unquestionably much that is good, mingled, unfortunately, with much that is evil.

In the Book of the Prophet Isaiah we have Visions, Prophecies, Threatenings, Lamentations, Judgments, Songs, Curses, Blessings, &c. This prophet cannot altogether do without miracles, for the shadow on the sun-dial of Ahaz is made to go ten degrees backward, as a sign that God would fulfil certain promises to Hezekiah. Anyone who can at all estimate the immense labour to the Almighty such a transaction must have involved, in the rearrangement of the whole solar system, would think it infinitely preferable to adopt some more simple means of satisfying Hezekiah.

Jeremiah also contains Judgments, Threatenings, Prophecies, Desolations, Curses, Lamentations.

Ezekiel is another prophet who introduces himself to us with a vision, and a most remarkable vision it is. Moses and others came recommended by God, but Ezekiel is determined to surpass them. His vision, however curious, does not certainly enhance our veneration for the Almighty. Prophecies, Judgments, Threatenings, are also the staple of this prophet's work.

Daniel follows. He interprets dreams, and, as might be expected, relates some wonderful stories. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego are, by Nebuchadnezzar, thrown into a burning fiery furnace, and they escape unhurt. That monarch himself is degraded to the condition of a nondescript. He eats grass as an ox, and has the feathers of an eagle, and nails like claws. Afterwards Daniel is cast into a den of lions among whom he passes a night in perfect safety.

Hosea, Joel, and Amos, indulge in Judgments, Threatenings, Promises, and Exhortations, likewise.

Passing on from these we come to Jonah, who, it seems, was a missionary on a journey to Nineveh, but instead of going there played the truant by going off to Tarshish. He paid his passage-money by a certain ship, and had not long been on the voyage when a gale of wind sprung up. The superstitious sailors, imagining

that they would thereby appease the anger of heaven, determined to offer as a sacrifice, one of the number on board, such individual to be signified by lot. The lot fell upon Jonah, and he was flung into the sea. But the Lord preserved him from a watery fate by making a whale swallow him; and Jonah lived three days in this monster's belly.

The remaining few pages of the Old Testament possess no eminently distinctive character requiring especial notice.

If in this very brief and imperfect sketch is set forth correctly some of the principal passages of the Books in the Old Testament, is it too much to assert that a work which deals in such materials, is scarcely the right thing for the instruction of youth? Besides, if such instruction had resulted to the advantage of the Jews of old, it might be looked upon more favourably; but the reverse is the case. The Jews have not only lost their country and the promised land, they have not only been driven out of the homes of their great progenitors, but they are dispersed throughout the globe. As a nation they are ruined.

If, on the other hand, you consider all these things, which I have rapidly gathered together, to be true, I should like to know what is false in history. And yet we are aware that history is full of errors, even the

history of recent times. But whether true or not, what we have to consider is the benefit to be derived from such instruction. I say that the consequence of it is bad and must be bad. It is useless, and worse than useless, to extol a book, as many do, in the conventional language borrowed of the Church. It is our duty as thinking men, *and it is a very serious duty*, to examine and try all things, and prove all things, before taking them as examples or governing principles of action.

Conviction of a truth best reaches the mind when it is unaccompanied by anything mysterious, or impossible to comprehend. The truths which may be found by searching in these Books, lose much of their effect through the mass of errors in which they are embedded.

Turn we now to the New Testament. The foremost personage of the Books which form it is Jesus Christ.

Leaving aside the miracles with which his followers have credited him, let us examine a few of his principal utterances. Miracles instruct us in nothing; they serve but to propagate and keep alive our credulity. They are intended by the writers to add weight to the authority of his statements. Let us consider some of these statements, for by them shall we be able to judge of the teacher.

In one place Jesus Christ says, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name He will give it you."

This statement has misled many. It tends to implant in us unpracticable and unreal notions. Taken literally it is simply untrue, as many a one has found to his cost. There is only one general way of getting what we require, and that is by working for it, and the sooner all such notion is dismissed from our minds, as that God gives us what we ask, for the asking, the better for us. He has appointed work for each one of us to perform, and He will no more give us anything for the asking, than He would help a carter whose wheel had stuck in the mud. The nation which relied on such a declaration would soon be reduced to beggary.

Christ having shown us that to be poor in spirit, to be meek, to hunger and thirst after righteousness, to be merciful, to be pure in heart, to be peacemakers, to be righteous, are all conditions of blessedness, how can we reconcile the behaviour of one, filled with such excellent ideas, with his exclamation to certain Pharisees, "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things?"

It is not by the use of such language that you can make men, especially your adversaries, listen to you

with attention and interest. Much less is such discourse likely to improve them.

Again, a divine teacher could not have made use of the following declaration, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth, I come not to send peace but the sword: for I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be of his own household."

This is a marvellous declaration from one who made it his frequent business to repeat that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. Upwards of eighteen hundred years have passed since that time, and this kingdom has not yet made its appearance. The reign of eternal peace, security and happiness is not ours yet, but very far from it. That sword which he "came to send" still does its work of blood and butchery among nations. Nevertheless is it not the fact that the kingdom of heaven never was a thing to be expected. The earth is a kingdom of the sovereign of heaven. And if we really understand what happiness is, and if we desired its possession on this globe, we must assimilate ourselves to our Maker's rules. The teaching of Jesus Christ was insufficient to make men understand these rules, and hence, after so full a trial,

the general failure of his instruction and the misery which we see around.

Again, to frighten a man with the torments of "hell fire," and with pictures of "weeping and gnashing of teeth," shows the unwisdom of the teacher. To frighten is to injure the power of the mind. We require all our faculties to see our way clearly in this world amongst all its difficulties—trials, alas! greatly enhanced by false instruction in various quarters.

Forgiveness of sin, is another error in the instruction of the Great Teacher of Nazareth. Our Maker does not forgive sin. There is no remission of the penalty which follows a given act. And, therefore, it is useless asking him to forgive. We thereby put ourselves on the wrong road to personal improvement.

He has made laws, and He expects to have them obeyed. It is more reasonable, to say the least, that we should adapt ourselves and our behaviour to those laws, than that He should bend and shape His plans and will, according to our requests. It is not by His listening to our infirmities that we become improved; but it is by our rising out of, and overcoming them, so as to reach unto His more perfect ways, that we perfect ourselves.

He has appointed to everything, whether physical or moral, a certain property. For instance, if I take a

dose of poison sufficient in quantity to kill an adult, unless I counteract its effects by an antidote, the chances are pretty certain that I shall soon be dead. No amount of praying can save me. If I caught a fever, praying could not lessen it, but something physical must be done. In like manner, if I got drunk, or committed theft, or suffered myself to indulge in an outburst of passion, it is not by praying for forgiveness of these sins, that I get quit or absolved of them, or make myself free from committing such practices again.

The man who has been drunk has to cultivate temperance for his remedy against such a vile indulgence ; he who has stolen should take to some honest industrious pursuit, so that he may obtain a livelihood and steal no more ; and he who breaks into passion should cultivate gentleness and moderation as his remedy, in order to counteract a weakness, which, if not controlled, may one day cause him to commit some great violence. Peace neglected produces strife ; and he who makes not truth his rule will find lying easy : and so on of every other vice.

These matters may appear plain to those who employ reason as their guide, but unhappily the largest part of men and women go through life without the use of this faculty. The instruction which

they receive from their earliest infancy is based on the legends of Scripture; books of fables, and monstrous pictures, put into the hands of children from their earliest infancy, are sufficient to destroy that noblest of gifts which the Almighty has bestowed on man.

Now, in what manner shall we regard all so-called facts which Scripture enumerates? They are either true, or they are false. If false, then it is worse than useless to read them, because they pretend to be true. If they are true, then there must have been a time when our Maker managed matters differently from what He does now. "That was an age of miracles, and God can do as He likes," is the ready reply. Yes, but I am considering the benefit or otherwise to us at present of the reading and study of the Old and New Testaments.

As ours is not an age of miracles, but one of great personal responsibility, where a speedy retribution tracks the path of ignorance, and as we have minds which must be nourished with proper food, so that they may be strengthened to contend against the evils of the day; so it is most desirable that the things which we admit into the mind should be facts, fit objects capable of being safely received into that receptacle; truths calculated to nourish our minds,

just as wholesome food, assimilating within us, invigorates and strengthens our bodies.

Ours is a practical world, and we pride ourselves upon being a practical people. And, depend upon it, so long as we are really practical; so long as we can take a sensible view of the things, opinions, movements, and doings around us, so long will we preserve our place among the nations of the earth, and no longer. Other nations equally, if not more, practical, are rising up on our right hand and on our left, and it behoves us seriously to ask what we are about at this great crisis which we have reached in the history of this nation. How are we educating our youth? That is the question of all questions.

I say there is no practical good to be derived from the perusal of that collection of old books termed the Bible. For the mind is filled by these books with extravagant and fabulous stories. They give us, moreover, an improper conception of our Maker. They make Him, who is the All-Perfect, to be as changeable as man himself.

REAL KNOWLEDGE is what is required for the nourishment of the mind of man at all periods of his life, and especially is this necessary in the time of youth.

Where the mind is filled with artificial non-natural

matter, it is not surprising if its simplicity, its sincerity, its truthfulness, its strength and power of discernment are impaired. Where error forms the foundation, what can you expect in the superstructure but weakness and sin?

The New Testament unquestionably abounds in much that is really excellent and practical; unfortunately, it also contains much that is unpractical and unreal. The writers of it were just emerging from the darkness which enveloped the Jewish school of thought, and that is why they could not relieve themselves wholly from the prevailing superstition. Hence we see miraculous accounts, similar to those in the Old, brought forward to strengthen the statements put forth in the New.

Besides, if we look closely into the lives of the great men of Scripture, whether as regards the Old or the New Testaments, we shall soon perceive that none of them were so estimable or perfect in their character, as to compel us to receive all the statements connected with their names and times and history as true. On the contrary, we see such great flaws in their characters, as to compel the belief that the times in which they lived were times of gross ignorance, immorality, vice, and barbarism; times of great imperfection, and that, therefore, we are right in objecting to receive the

portraits handed down to us, in these Books, as exemplars of life.

If it really were a fact that our safety consisted in the mere belief in Christ as God, then Christ would have insisted upon that truth, he would have pressed it upon the minds of his disciples and countrymen in a manner never to be misunderstood, whereas he does nothing of the sort. He dwells very plainly on other great truths which concern the welfare of mankind, and it is only by inference that this most prominent doctrine of the Church is made out and upheld.

It was, in fact, only some two hundred years after Christ that such a doctrine became an article of belief!

The proper way in which to regard this extraordinary doctrine is this. It is one of several mysteries in which the Church delights to dwell; without the possession of such occult machinery, it ceases to hold power over the people. Such mysteries may, and doubtless have been useful in barbarous times to make the decrees of the Church more respected; but in these days they only serve to mislead.

The manner in which Dogma has been manufactured from age to age, may be gathered from what passed at the "Ecumenical Council" at Rome, in 1870. Six hundred prelates of all ranks were there assembled, and for days discussed the doctrine of the

Infallibility of the Pope. Many of the most enlightened of the Council opposed the proposition with unanswerable arguments, but the majority, acting as similar Councils had previously done, having resolved upon carrying it, brow-beat the minority. And this God-like attribute of infallibility became an article of faith in the most popular branch of the Christian Church! Not many years before, and during the same Pontificate, the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary was decreed. It is in this manner the Faith of a Church is fashioned and built up. When the human mind travels out of the track of reason and common sense, what ridiculous shifts it reaches. What feebleness have not these prelates exhibited when they pronounce a human creature to be infallible! and, stranger still, though a stirring protest was made during the sitting of the Council by many of its members against the Dogma of Papal Infallibility, yet most who subscribed to it, afterwards found it necessary to recant, comforting themselves with the notion that they sacrificed their reason to their faith!

The best way of making people good is the plainest. That which can be understood and acted upon. It is certainly not that way which builds upon mystery, requiring all the credulity possible. To set our Maker and His laws plainly before us, *that* should be the

sublime duty of the Church, and the earlier she sets about it the better for her and for mankind.

Public ministrations, where employed, should consist in the reading of good works, discourses on personal culture, and other profitable subjects. The object should be edification, bodily, mental, and spiritual. Prayer is a most important adjunct, as it primarily helps us to maintain faith in the reality of the existence of our Creator. Faith, in this great matter should not be nominal and faint; but real, unaffected, and strong. In prayer, as in everything which concerns us, great discrimination should be exercised; we should not ask for that which is unreasonable, and which cannot be granted.

When services are conducted on intelligible rules, a stream of goodness is established. The soul cruelly bound in fetters more galling than those of slavery, is released from darkness; and rejoicing in its liberty, acquires increasing delight and strength. Unencumbered with superstition, the faculty of preserving spiritual life is promoted to the fullest extent. The influence of our Maker on the heart and soul is earnestly sought, and this influence is perceived to be more necessary to it than is the warmth of the sun to the body. The love for our Maker and our race is encouraged and increased.

If the Church in England will not see the danger which threatens it, if it will not take a lesson from all that has occurred on the continent of Europe, then it should become the business of the nation and people of this country to take their own spiritual interests in hand.

It is useless looking back upon the past, and flattering ourselves that our prosperity betokens welfare and no need of change. Our prosperity is due to the industry of the inhabitants of these islands generally, and to the skill of our men of science. That industry and this skill will be ours whether we make a change or not. But these very people, unless a change is wrought in our method of education, *will rise and thresh all our institutions to dust.* The scientific and the industrious classes will demand before long surer methods of improvement than any which exist, and they will have them. The religion of the country must be founded on a better footing. If the Church cannot define its instruction in terms and in language made free from ambiguity and mystery—if it will not surrender its forms and its sentiments, and exchange them for realities, then it is simply acting unfairly towards itself and towards the people. It is not fair to demand assent to things which people cannot understand. It is not fair to the well-being of either the Church or the people. Unless the one can rest on the bosom of the other in the

fullest confidence, there will not be perfect safety for either. The worst consequences possible happen when you lose all confidence in your guides.

Give a man his liberty of thought and of action; restore to him the elasticity of his judgment; render to him the power of weighing his conduct and of watching his course; cease to fill him, from his infancy upwards, with fables as light as the wind; dwarf not his intellect with uncouth tales respecting his Maker; release him from the trammels of superstition in which he has been bound; in a word, give him back his reason, that inner eye of the soul, and then he will see the beauty of his Maker's laws. Then he will discover the good which they work in all that concerns him. Then will he have the power so to rule all his thoughts and actions that he will be able heartily to say, "in Thy law is my delight."

The principles which we should cultivate in respect to our moral and spiritual welfare are active and living principles whose efficacy cannot be disputed. They are simple, well-known truths. Their cultivation has long been enjoyed by good, earnest men, in all ages of the world; they are these:—PEACE; PATIENCE; LOVE; SINCERITY; HONESTY; TRUTH; CHASTITY; MODERATION; TEMPERANCE; SOBRIETY; CHARITY; INDUSTRY; and some others.

Singularly enough, though we accept these principles to be sound truths, though they are among the commonest of household words, yet our observance of them is rare and difficult. Why should this be so? What is there more lovable than peace, moderation, and the other qualities mentioned; and yet, if you look around into the midst of many a family, do you not see raging the opposite of all these amiable qualities? This is because people do not consider the great truth which has been before the eyes of humanity from the creation of man to this time, that eternal verity which was long afterwards called to our remembrance by St. Paul,—"Whatever we sow, that we reap." We do not discern where the root, the life of these principles lies. Other things, not truths, stand in the way of, and trip up, as it were, all our efforts and intentions towards the good, the sublime, and the true. We do not perceive that these are cardinal truths. True power resides in them. It is the only power which can overcome evil; and therefore should be exercised to the full. These are the truths which really lead us to the haven of security and happiness; they are principles which have durability in all ages, and in all places, and among all people. They are eternal verities, and wherever found they give to that spot the atmosphere of heaven, for they are identical with the

truths which prevail and govern society in heaven. In the cultivation of them is bound up all that is good and pure, and lovely, in the life of mankind. Happiness, long life, and immortality; a continual rejoicing in every step towards our future state. If we do not cultivate these principles in an earnest, decided, absolute manner, what is the inevitable consequence? Why other principles of opposite nature and tendency must take up their place in our mind. There is no such thing as a vacuum in the work of the Great Maker. The mind of man cannot be vacant; if he will not cultivate the truths here set down, other principles will take their place. If he will not grow flowers of loveliest forms and hues, then thistles and weeds will appear; it cannot be otherwise. *Whatever we sow that we shall reap.* This is a great law which underlies almost every step of our existence. Its very simplicity makes us pass it by for something more specious which is pressed upon us. We ought constantly to bring every proposition to the touchstone of our reason, our judgment, our understanding, so that we may know what we are about. It is by this method alone that we improve ourselves. Let us be firm, and clear, and decided in our decision; great and everlasting results depend upon our choice. We either rest our faith and future on meaningless forms,

ceremonies, and beliefs, or on pregnant life-bearing facts.

Is not belief in Christ not only unnecessary but calculated to disturb the operation of these truths? Nay more, is not the belief in Christ represented to be more efficacious and necessary to the happiness of man, than the culture of these truths? Is it not held as of primary importance, and these principles as subsidiary? Ought this to be so? Is there no danger that a person relying on faith in Christ may commit all manner of crime, believing that his faith still saves him? We see similar reliance on absolution for sin, granted by the priesthood. Here we see how human devices may be both invented and developed. First, belief in Christ is said to save us: next, absolution of the priest cleanses us from sin. It is not so with the principles of which we have been speaking. There can be no self-deception here. By night, or by day, whatever you are doing, you are building yourself up into what you will be. You are moulding, manufacturing your character. You are either collecting together things lovely and good to make up that character, and thus work out your happiness, or you are getting together things ugly and bad, which occupy your mind to your discomfort and ruin. There is a mathematical precision in these results which cannot be overthrown.

If you are putting in practice the principles here enumerated, you may rest assured of your safety, because these principles must produce fruit like themselves. You are resting in everlasting laws: so long as you rely on them, is your security assured. You are not trusting, as some will affirm, to your work, but to the Maker's laws. It is for you carefully to ascertain that you are truly in harmony with these rules. This is easily seen by the fruit of your conduct and by your life; of your daily intercourse in the bosom of your family, your servants, your companions, your dependents. Do they, or do they not, love and respect you for the good qualities you possess. Now, while it is scarcely possible for a person who is cultivating such things to commit crime, it is not only quite possible, but a common occurrence, for a believer in Christ, simply as such, to commit all manner of evil. Belief in Christ has no precise action, no power in itself, to save me from committing sin. It is not belief in any person or thing which prevents us from falling into error. To avoid falling into the ways of sin, we must know the way of goodness; and not only know the way, but walk in it.

By cultivating the way of goodness, we acquire for ourselves an individuality, a strength of existence and of purpose, a spiritual power which we had not before.

We cease to lean on any human authority. We rest on the laws of the Great Being who rules over all. Belief in Christ is not an eternal, but a human idea. It is not a universal truth, and can never have a general application. It will to the end of time be denied in all parts of the universe; whereas the true principles which make our happiness are, and will be, accepted everywhere by people competent to judge of right and wrong, of good and evil.

What would be thought of a master who, finding his servants persist, through ignorance and neglect, in suffering weeds to grow in his garden, determines to shoot his only son in order to show his detestation of weeds and his love for his servants? Would this be thought, to say the least of it, the right sort of instruction against the production of weeds?

As the right cultivation of the health of the body is not of human invention, but is a matter depending wholly on physical laws, in like manner the cultivation of the spirit is found in moral laws, immutable in their effect and consequence as the Maker himself. These laws have nothing to do with belief in any individual person, saint, or God. I may, for instance, believe firmly in God, but unless I cultivate my field as I ought, I shall get no fruit. Exactly so with respect to human health and virtue. According as we sin-

cerely put in practice the laws above mentioned, we obtain the results which their exercise produce.

It is not, then, belief in a Saviour which is necessary for our safety, improvement, and happiness, but belief in the virtue-producing laws of our Maker, a firm reliance on their strength and efficacy to work in us all that is required to improve and enhance the condition and happiness of mankind.

Our teachers shelter themselves under the idea that the whole path to happiness is a mystery. They talk of the amazing love of God until our minds are bewildered. If ever there was a mountain of difficulty in the way of understanding the ways of our Maker, this one is the greatest. Unquestionably He is full of goodness towards man. Good to perfection in Himself, nothing but goodness can proceed from Him. But doctrines like these, instead of bringing us to Him, separate us from our Maker. They widen the breach between us. The spirit of man, to be of any worth, should be an inquiring, intelligent spirit. It should not take things for granted, especially things relating to our Maker and His laws, at least so far as we are personally concerned. These laws are the great landmarks which should guide us through life, because it is only by them we have a chance of reaching Him.

Who is He that formed the wheat-seed and gave it

its qualities, and appointed it as the natural food for man? The Almighty One. That seed, among many others, He has made for our physical nourishment. In like manner He has placed before us the qualities of LOVE, &c., for moral and spiritual food. But as the wheat and other earthly fruit, unless they are actively cultivated, yield us little or no good, equally so must we cultivate these principles in order to derive benefit from them. They are not to rank as subsidiary to any other knowledge, but they are to be held as the chief and the primary truths of life. They are the best possessions of beings of a spiritual nature. Without the possession of these principles we have nothing to protect us from the evils of life. They are designed as the ever-fructifying principles of our spiritual head, and their possession, by each one of us, is required at our hands now in our journey here, and will be required in that spiritual life beyond. When opposite sentiments occupy the mind, they will grow over it to the injury and exclusion of these eternal principles of the Most High. Such has been the case in times past, when men, the most zealous, as they thought themselves, in the service of God, burned and killed and otherwise destroyed myriads of their fellow-creatures. I declare that such men, whether they were in the Church or out of it, never knew God, for they pos-

sessed none of His spirit. If men have not a brotherly affection for all mankind, and will permit themselves to destroy or injure the meanest of human creatures, they know not the Father of us all.

The strife we are compelled to witness from time to time in our own day among the various religious sects, shows that the instruction they have received is not of the right sort. Guided by false conceptions of the truth, they neglect the cultivation of the principles I have set forth; and are therefore producing fruit of the bitterest kind. We need not require to go far to see that they are on the wrong path. It matters not how respectable the body to which they belong. They suffer the weeds of envy, hatred, and malice to grow over their minds, making of no effect the force and growth of these great and good principles; and their conduct consequently becomes full of passion and ferocity. That is the whole secret of the matter. We must first know the way. If we ask the way of safety of our teachers, we are told to "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," and further, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord and he will sustain thee." We find, on examination, that these statements have no practical value in them. Devoid of meaning and force, they but seem too often to distract those who accept them on credit, while they

repel those altogether who cannot accept them at all. Whereas, if the way to happiness were more clearly pointed out so as to be thoroughly understood, it would be difficult for any person to err. It stands to reason that when once the right way on any journey is made plain, it is only the very foolish who go astray.

If people do not perceive this great truth, that in the direct culture of these qualities lies the regeneration of mankind, it can only be because their reasoning faculties are impaired. Through disease and the acceptance of non-natural perversions of fact, just as the power of sight in certain fish and other creatures living in the dark becomes extinguished. This law operates equally, with respect to mankind, as it does in regard to the whole animal world. It shows us the responsibility under which we live as to the cultivation of our faculties.

There is a grand creative power in these qualities, which cannot be too often insisted on, and which, while it promotes the self-government of each individual, rapidly provides for the safety and solidarity of the nation in a manner that no other system affords.

The knowledge of these rules is essential to the well-being of society. In them will be found the amplest resources for the extension of progress and happiness. Their scope is wide enough to embrace

the whole human race. And, in place of the anarchy and confusion of ideas which we see everywhere, there will be produced, by the cultivation of these qualities, and by the acceptance of these rules, a unity, an ever-widening, fraternal bond among all nations, such as has never before been contemplated. There never can arise amelioration for humanity in general, until these fundamental rules take root in our social system; simply because they, and they only, are the ever-abiding causes, the real and everlasting means through which the Maker acts on the minds and spirits of individual men.

Everything tells of the transitory nature of our institutions. The religious beliefs of the Churches are no longer trusted to with that zeal and fervour which they formerly obtained. Civilization itself stands endangered while we look on the ruins of the past. The work of reconstruction should be begun speedily, if it is to be undertaken at all. The edifice of society should be raised upon foundations obviously eternal. Every idea which cannot be accepted as accurate and true, should be set aside. There should be no compromise with the unreal, wherever met, or there will be further delay and detriment to the work of securing the happiness of humanity.

Things cannot go on much longer as they are. It

is in vain for the leaders of the people to insist upon the acceptance by them of the instruction of the past eighteen hundred years. There is no coherence anywhere in such instruction. That instruction is the parent of all that we see, whether good or evil. It is illogical and inconsistent, and the sooner it is abandoned for that which is sounder and safer, the better. The human must be forsaken for the Divine, the perishable for the Eternal. Happy shall we be if one great man, before it is too late, look into these matters. The whole framework of society is loose. We stand upon a very insecure footing. Class is everywhere in antagonism to class. And is this condition always to be so? Are we ever to live, as it were, on a volcano? Shall man never be able to repose in tranquillity among his brethren? Are we ever to dwell, as it were, among wolves instead of among men? Is man, who is endowed with a dignity almost angelic, for ever to renounce his high vocation, and be only an unreasoning animal?

As the warmth of the body is absolutely necessary to its health, in like manner warmth of feeling towards all is the basis of a sound spiritual life. The loss of physical warmth is felt and known when we have contracted what we call a cold or chill; and this condition is the foundation or leading cause of many

diseases. Equally so is the condition of coldness towards our fellow-creatures ; of indifference as to who and what they are, and to their circumstances and conditions, a symptom which should not be encouraged in us. If we possessed an affectionate regard for all simply because they are human beings like ourselves ; if we loved one another as we ought to do, we should find that this fellow-feeling would enable us to perform more readily all our moral duties. The cultivation of virtue would be exceedingly easy. Love is the greatest of all the virtues, and around it all the others will be found to cluster. Peace, joy, sincerity, truth, gentleness, will be ours, and we shall be prevented falling into deeds of violence and crime. And in thus learning to exercise ourselves towards those we see and meet around us we discover our obligation towards our inner self. We perceive that the attitude to maintain towards our fellow-creatures has everything to do with the health of the soul. This is its true nourishment, without it there is no strength in it ; there can be no dependence on its safety. We must enjoy an abiding sense of love in us for all.

The worship best and most appropriate for humanity will be found in pure Deism. Let it not be said in future that the Deist has no religion of his own. It consists in the adoration of God only, supplemented by

a knowledge and application of His laws in regard to our health, our mental and spiritual nature.

I insist with humility, though with firmness, that this is the right channel into which the attention of mankind should be guided, for in it I am perfectly convinced will be found the best and fullest blessings for the whole race of man.

True religion consists not in beliefs and sacrifices, nor in forms and observances which have no meaning, but in substantial laws, life-giving rules, promoting health, physical, mental, and spiritual, all leading up to a sublime faith in the one true God, the Maker and Sustainer of all things.

Man's power is great; he is not like a stone, inert, but is continually acting either on others or on himself. If he only knew what to do and how to do it; if he could be made to learn the effects of certain lines of conduct; if he would learn that the will exercised in one way produces such and such fruit, and in another manner weeds and thistles, and no fruit at all; if it could be shown him to demonstration, that such results were positive and followed laws, and if these laws and their workings were explained to him, it is not too much to believe that he would profit by them.

The proper employment of the faculties of the mind, the channels into which it should be trained to run, has

not hitherto received that attention which so important a subject deserves. Or if at all heeded, the means to which recourse has been had by the Church have been such as are calculated to destroy the healthy action of the will, and to keep it continually in a state of bondage, tied down to dogmas the most unnatural and impossible.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MORALITY OF INDIVIDUALS.

In the foregoing pages I have sketched imperfectly some of the leading principles which should regulate the two great departments of our nature—Body and Soul. I have shown that by the observance of these principles alone, can health be obtained, or at all events secured, for either. These principles, I have also pointed out, may be resolved into one, namely, that in order to secure health of body and of soul, the legitimate exercise of every faculty of each is absolutely necessary. I have indicated how the leading wants of the body should be provided for, and have touched upon a few of the baneful consequences which result when the natural gratification of these is suspended, as it often has been, by the teachings of so-called human wisdom. And I have been earnest in claiming for the faculty of faculties—the Reason—perfect freedom from all those restraints by which human systems have hitherto held it prisoner. It now

remains for me to consider the two, as we find them, in combination, to lay down a few maxims for the conduct of life in the circumstances with which we may happen to be surrounded, and to deal with man, not only as an individual, but as massed into societies; so that it may be shown how, by the observance of these principles in all relations of life, every individual or every state, acting and reacting upon others, may help to swell the total of human happiness.

My body is a property, my mind is a property, and my spirit is a property. According as I cultivate these properties, so will be the benefit I derive from them. Each and all of them must be treated according to the design of the Maker. Unless this is the case they suffer. Except the body is treated according to physical laws, it suffers pain, disease, and premature death. Unless the mind is cultivated according to mental laws it becomes weak and of little worth. Unless the spirit is cultivated in a spiritual manner, the human agent never reaches its high destiny. There is such a thing as a purely animal existence. There is such a thing as a mixed mental and animal existence; and there is such a thing as a physical and mental and spiritual existence together. This last condition is the highest order to which man can attain. There is a food proper to the body, there is a

food proper to the mind, and there is a food proper for the spirit. The lowest class of culture is the physical, while the highest is the spiritual. The latter, when founded on rational objects, is capable of affording the highest degree of gratification.

It is of the greatest importance that we should obtain correct knowledge in respect to all these points, for by the successful application of such knowledge we obtain a condition of health and happiness which we could not otherwise possibly reach.

Every person about to undertake anything worthy of attention has a plan. The architect, the mariner, the agriculturist, the painter, the sculptor, the orator, have all their respective plans. Each has an outline which has to be filled up. But all these plans are inferior to that greatest plan which must underlie all others, a system established for the well-being of mankind in all parts of the earth.

The Maker from the beginning has laid down rules of happiness, and these rules are immutable, for, like Him, they are unchangeable. On them is built the duty of man. We should all possess an ideal, some clear conception of the duty required of us, for everything has a work to perform of its own, an outline of that which is excellent and good to be filled up by us in our lives.

It is obvious that we have something else to do besides working, and eating, and drinking, and sleeping. If you add to these necessary duties, going to the opera, keeping a horse or carriage, giving fashionable parties, and having a flourishing banking account, and the prospect of some fine day purchasing an estate in the country, rich in tenements and farms, you will find that as each of these steps of your ambition have been reached your desires are not satisfied. The inner life has perhaps all the while been neglected. Physical objects have been attained, but the health of the spirit, where is it? Unrecognised from day to day, there are moments when conscience whispers to the gayest, the richest, the proudest, "thou runnest after things which are vain and worthless compared with that which is real and true." In seeking things physical the pursuit is but of temporary duration, while the things spiritual are of all time, eternal.

Let it not be said that these ideas are impractical, such is not the case. They provide us with a distinct aim, an object worthy of every effort, an unfailing chart of safety, an intelligent path in which he who runs is sure to prosper in body and spirit, a unity of thought and of action not based on any human theory, but taking its rise and spring in the Divine mind.

unfailing support in the severest trials of life, because we see with a perfect light that we are not working in darkness, nor are we occupied in the works of darkness, but are in harmony with His will, steadily pursuing our way heavenward, where He is. If we are working the work of this inner life, if we are cultivating the strength and health of the spirit in the manner in which it ought to be cultivated; if we are providing our souls with the sound nutriment which they demand, not feeding them on forms and ceremonies and on unintelligible, mysterious doctrines, then will the strength of our souls be magnified, and we shall have the richest of rewards, here and hereafter, in a peace which knows no unrest, but which overflows with blessings and happiness.

To observe the rules of physical life is unmistakably to ensure to us health and long life, a length of life corresponding to the full strength of constitution of the body. This is a statement within the bounds of actual proof and experience. It should afford us a conviction that, in like manner, to apprehend aright, and in all sincerity to cultivate the rules of morals and of virtue, secures to us without fail the commencement of that spiritual life which is within us now, and of

are all hastening, will expand into something inexpressibly great and beautiful, but, in one respect, unlike our bodily existence, which terminates here, lives on for ever. How immeasurably greater then is the interest attached to this spirit compared with the interest of the body.

The germs of these eternal principles are implanted in the minds of all men. And according to the extent of their cultivation, so will the measure of happiness be. A person who has cultivated all these qualities, and made them his own, will necessarily be in a happier state of existence than one who has only cultivated a few of them. Hence we see the votaries of the various forms of religion on the globe, whether Christian or others, notwithstanding their respective superstitions, some possessing greater and others less degrees of excellence, all derived from their common cultivation of these in a greater or less degree.

A life of morality and goodness is as plain and visible a duty in nature, and, therefore, enjoined by our Maker who is the author of nature, as we may say is the cultivation of our fields and gardens. Who is the possessor of a field or of a garden and does not cultivate it? That man offends against the laws of his Maker. Why is a field cultivated but to produce

or rye or barley, or some other product which will be useful and profitable to the owner?

If the latter is a wise man, he avoids planting that which is useless or which will interfere with his crops, and he diligently plucks up by the roots any stray briars or nettles; for he knows that they propagate themselves as speedily, if not more so, than the good things of his field, and are worse than useless to him, occupying as they do valuable space and cramping the growth of his crop. Exactly so of our social life, or morals; we must be careful what we cultivate in ourselves and in our families, for whatever we cultivate that shall we find growing and producing crops. It is impossible for it to be otherwise. Our habits or propensities whatever they are, whether good, bad, or indifferent are perpetuating themselves in us. They take their root and produce their fruit according to the nature of the seed or habit we are sowing within our minds. If we have made a selection of good habits we shall enjoy a crop of good things, appropriate to those habits in the proper season. There will be a continual feast to us in the contemplation of such a selection and such valuable crops; but if we have been so foolish as to allow base and bad habits to grow in the

We should be most careful, then, to see what kind of ideas we entertain in our minds; what the nature of our actions, what our habits, what our words, what our thoughts. It is just as easy to make a selection of habits for the cultivation of our minds as it is for us to make a selection of seed for planting in our gardens or fields. It has, unfortunately, been customary for our guides to place before us the most doubtful and imperfectly understood ideas, and hence the wandering, aimless lives of most people. They seem to be drifting about, and no wonder, the way of life has been made so obscure that they cannot understand it. Mystery has been the governing idea instead of simplicity. Wherever truth is tampered with, blindness falls upon all alike—votaries as well as their guides are at fault—all go astray out of the right path of happiness.

But there is no mistaking the pathway here pointed out. Examine it for yourself. Does the proposition whatever you sow that you shall reap, meet the thorough approval of your reason, or does it not? If it does, then your way is plain enough. You are bound to step into it, and it will assuredly lead you into happiness. Disregard it, and you may look forward with equal certainty to your discomfort, to say nothing

does not require any revelation to tell you so. Judge for yourself.

It is wrong to assert that because there is so much evil and suffering in the world the government of God is therefore to blame. There cannot be such a thing as imperfection in Him, or in any of His works. The reason of this evil and suffering is our own ignorance; our inability to follow this true path of life and of safety; the real ways of our Maker have been hidden from us. Man being an independent being, he must search out and achieve his own regeneration. Self-improvement is the one idea which must be driven home to the heart and soul of each one; nothing extraneous must divert us from this greatest of all duties. Unless this is effected entirely by human agency and effort, it is not effected at all, the nature of man is such that he must learn to conquer; the moral must achieve a victory over the material. As a man, by cultivating his field gets crops according to such cultivation, in like manner we gather as fruit either happiness or misery, according to the nature of the discipline or cultivation to which we have subjected ourselves.

This is the A.B.C. of the spiritual or moral life of man, and unless he understands it he knows nothing.

ignorance of the world that this knowledge is very little understood and practised. There is consequently great misery; we will not perceive the difference between things eternal and those which are temporary. We will not acquire real treasures, but waste all our efforts in the most foolish manner; we do not know and will not consider the fact that primarily we are *spirits*, merely inhabiting the flesh, and must, therefore, in the first place, if we would be happy, gather things spiritual. If we have not in times past understood these things, if we have forfeited our good qualities, if we have in any way fallen, let us not despair, but rise in hopes of a better future. We shall be more successful under more favourable instruction, and with an advanced conception of our duty. To fall in any way is like exchanging what is good for something that is worthless. We discern our error after the event, and though we may not be able wholly to repair it, yet the circumstances should act on our memory as a lesson.

Principles and not men should ever be our guide; man cannot make a system of religion which is real; all he can do is to declare a truth, he cannot make one. Principles remain the same in their strength for ever, while man is removed; one generation succeeds another, but these ideas of the eternal are unalterable.

sure to be misled. The self-interests of states, of institutions, and of individuals, too frequently warp the mind out of the line of rectitude and duty. There are moral obstacles to our perception which must be got rid of if we wish to see moral truths. The believer in justification by faith, for instance, is so absorbed by this dogma that he will not listen to any idea contrary to it. He feels so comfortable in the faith which he reposes in Christ, that he likes nothing which is calculated to disturb it. Whereas if he really loved and cared for truth, if he really cared for the solution of the question of man's regeneration, as he calls it, if he really cared about the future of humanity, if he really cared about the sufferings of his fellow-creatures, if he really cared about their happiness, he would inquire how human improvement could be best accomplished, whether there was not one general plan appointed by the supreme Maker sufficient for man's happiness—a plan which would embrace all nations, and which had existence concurrently with the formation of man, and not something comparatively recent and confined in the first instance to a single and insignificant race of people.

The principles which the Maker of all requires us to

well known before his time. The Old Testament will be found to contain, if not all, certainly most of the principles advanced by Christ, so that it cannot be alleged that they were unknown or not employed before he appeared.

Let us again consider this fact which has come home to the experience of all. To preserve us against sickness have we not something to do. Are there not laws of health which, unless we observe and faithfully carry out, we become ill? and so long as we observe these laws are we not preserved in health? There is no good to be derived from trusting to any doctor or physician; something must personally be done; daily experience shows us that such is the fact, and if it is so with respect to that which is physical, if it is necessary that we should attend to the cultivation or care of our bodies to maintain physical health, how much more necessary is it to attend to our moral cultivation to get moral health. It is an idle, lazy invention that which causes us to put faith in another: it is a monstrous delusion from which the sooner we free ourselves the better for us and for posterity.

When the world knows whence comes happiness it will be the fault of all if they do not enjoy it. The sooner we perceive the springs whence happiness comes the earlier will we acknowledge that they are obtained

Mankind has too long been prejudiced against his Maker. Held up to him as a Being indulging in the fiercest of anger, man stands aloof at the mention of God. As an instance of His love of justice we are told that He can only clear the sinner of his guilt by the sacrifice of His Son, and when we demur to the quality of such justice, which condemns the innocent to death for the benefit of the guilty, and when our minds are bewildered at the confusion of sentiment which here presents itself, we are told it is a great mystery.

Unless our Maker provided a sufficient way for the well-being of man when he formed him, it is evident that He stands accused of an omission in respect to His own work. But such an idea cannot for a moment be sustained of a perfect Being. Also, how shall we ever be able to love Him if His plans in respect to us are mysterious. We never can be acquainted with His ways; we shall always be strangers to Him. But this is not the fact; we do become acquainted with His plans; His ways are plain and simple enough if we would consider them.

Separate belief in Christ from these principles, and you will find that the latter will stand; remove the principles from Christianity, and you will find that

Of the antiquity of these principles there can be no question. They must have had existence before man was created; they doubtless have been the guide of all good men in every age and nation. Wherever humanity is respected and loved, wherever its value is understood, there in a greater or less degree these principles obtain. They were earliest known and practised in the bosom of the family; then, as our intercourse expanded, their exercise has been called into wider play, until at length, as our knowledge increases, we perceive that humanity is a great brotherhood; that universal love should ever prevail among nations.

But can their votaries claim even the merit of antiquity, for the doctrines which divide humanity and which break it up into sects, out of whom issue numerous strifes. Take for instance the chief dogmas of the Church as they were successively proclaimed:—

The Divinity of Christ; the Doctrine of the Trinity; the Eucharist; the Immaculate Conception; the Infallibility of the Pope; most of these are but comparatively ancient, some are but of yesterday.

We know the manner in which the two last were proclaimed, for the game was played out in our own days. We know also from history how the others were brought about. The opportunities furnished us of

invented. We see how new chains are forged to hang round the consciences of men. Is it at all surprising that we do not feel the force of principles which are everlasting as we ought, when our minds have been poisoned with such fallacies?

As little children, when they are made to walk before their tender limbs can bear the weight of their bodies, become deformed, so it fares with our youthful minds. Forced to receive ideas which are not to be understood, the healthy action of the mind is deranged, the normal power of the machine destroyed, the reasoning faculty, instead of increasing in strength and perception, as it ought to do with our growth, becomes a weak, distorted thing, the spirit is but a poor skeleton. Instead of a firm and constant soul, capable of controlling the animal body to which it is linked, it has on every small occasion of pressure or temptation to give way. Instead of a controlling power, which the Maker designed it to be, it has sunk into the position of a feeble prisoner, dragged by the body through the mire of every passion and lust.

Self-culture is the most necessary and the most profitable of all work; but it must be culture based on the rules of the Eternal; such a culture is the soul of

laws; our knowledge of His will increases; we fairly put into operation the best portion of our nature, the spiritual; we know that we must die physically; but our moral and spiritual faculties teach us to discern a hidden life, an existence which, though unseen, is nevertheless real, and that we shall become inhabitants of the unseen world to which we are hastening. Our spirit yearns after the Great Spirit, for He is the *ideal* of our life, and by following His ways we are purified unto perfection.

Culture established on any other foundation than these rules will assuredly fail. The culture of the ancient Greeks failed, for it was wanting in essential morality; it was deficient in the knowledge of the Deity. The Christianity of our day fails, because God is made by it to stand afar off, and is not known as He ought to be. His place is usurped, and the beauty of His laws diminished in our eyes. The community is devoured by forms raised on mistaken creeds, divided into a thousand sects, as if to convince us that there is no such thing as unity in humanity.

Culture, which is only material, is only half of that which humanity should strive to reach. The culture of the Greeks was not the culture of the soul, and, therefore, their society sunk under profligacy and cor-

reason that the portion of man most susceptible of culture must not be neglected. As everything material fades, so all culture which is only material produces only perishable results.

There are many conditions of life between the perfectly happy and the perfectly miserable; and all mankind are either moving towards the one extreme or the other. It depends wholly upon their actions to what extent or degree they approach either limit. If we are cultivating the qualities which form happiness, we are evidently pursuing the way to it, and will surely reach it or some degree of it, according to the effort we make, the clearness of our discernment, and the sincerity we employ in the pursuit. But if, on the other hand, we neglect, through ignorance or otherwise, the cultivation of the principles which produce happiness, then, without fail, principles of evil will spring up in us, and assuredly carry us away towards a state of misery more or less complete. It matters not at all whether any eye, human or other, sees us when we are prosecuting the journey, either towards good or evil as the case may be. It matters not, for instance, that the sin which we commit is hid from the one whom we love best; whether a parent, or a husband, or a wife, the effect on the individual so sinning is the same: he is stepping

whether they are good or bad, in like manner our actions, whether good or evil, though totally hid and unknown to all the world besides, are, according to their qualities, leading us either to happiness or to misery. We are continually adapting ourselves to the one state or to the other. Our thoughts, our looks, our words, our dress, our actions, are all contributing to form our character and life.

And let us not be deceived; our sins cannot be removed by the sacrifice of another. The only effectual sacrifice, if that word may be permitted, is this: the control of our sensual passions, self-denial. We cannot be acquitted by any act of another; the whole matter is purely personal. There is no royal road to virtue. If you want it you must cultivate the rules by which you acquire it of right, for it cannot be purchased with blood or money.

If it be asserted that it can only be had by the grace of God, or through belief in Christ, I reply that this is only true in the sense that a crop of wheat comes by the favour of God. I affirm that Christ has nothing to do with the matter. It is not in any "Washing of Blood," but in the actual assimilation into our nature of these great principles that our safety depends. They must be interwoven into our characters, and then we

must be learnt: goodness must be taught. Many a man, otherwise well educated, has been completely ruined by neglecting the pursuit of these essential qualities. Evil has overtaken him through some weak point which has been overlooked in his character. It is by the direct cultivation of moral qualities that we obtain virtue, and in order to have it, we must root up all superstitions which, like weeds, choke up and destroy the growth of good things. Belief in Christ, the Virgin, Sacraments, or other such conceptions are positive hindrances to its growth. The laws of the Almighty are of universal application, they are world-wide in their force. On the other hand, these dogmas of the Church resemble other utterances of men, whether of the Hindoo, the Buddhist, the Mahomedan, or the Jew. They are fallacies which have served, times out of number, to foster discord among nations to their danger, if not to their total ruin, whereas the promulgation and acceptance of the eternal principles of truth are calculated to heal all differences, and will bind all people in one common brotherhood.

The general objection to all forms of existing religion is this, that in place of the knowledge of the fact that virtue is derived from the direct cultivation

whatever to these principles; and, worse than this, forms a sort of Shibboleth which divides nation from nation. The consequence is that the thoughts of men never mingle as they should, they never know each other as they should be known; and the result is strife and war, malice and all uncharitableness.

To discipline our faculties is the only way to improvement. We should accustom ourselves to command our thoughts, to watch the current of them, to select and employ those which are the best. By this means we daily improve ourselves, and according as we exercise this discipline our spiritual power becomes greater. We build up for ourselves thereby a purity of character which is of the greatest importance here, and which, without doubt, will be of great value hereafter, when this body has undergone its final change, as it must before many years are over. It is the soul alone that lives; it is that in us which is our best part and which should be cultivated and cared for to the fullest extent. It is the future of our soul that we should most consider and provide for. It is the soul in us, even in this life, which makes us different from all animal life. The soul is alone great, for it is in connection with the Almighty, and being so connected how great ought to be our solicitude in respect of it!

of you, but what you really are that is important. Clothing, influence, rank, wealth, may give you the appearance of comfort and grandeur and well-being, while you may in reality be suffering from the most dreadful malady, and be threatened with utter ruin. Examine therefore into your inner self, and endeavour to learn what is your actual condition; consider well what is the current of your thoughts; look well at your words; examine your actions, and you will not find it difficult to discover what sort of person you are. You will soon see whether you are making for yourself a collection of virtues, or whether you are simply gathering vices; whether you are strengthening yourself with that which is good and pure and true, or with that which is corrupt and impure and false.

To cultivate daily the soil whence rise all our actions is to make impossible the growth of noxious, vicious habits. It is when the mind is vacant that evil thoughts, like weeds, take root and produce evil fruit; but where the mind is planted and cultivated with good principles, the result must be of a kind resembling the principles themselves: the fruit will invariably be according to the seed, and as to cultivate good principles makes it impossible to produce evil deeds, so to

It is not belief in any person nor even belief in our Maker Himself that will make us virtuous or happy; it is following out a certain line of conduct, a course which He has appointed, that makes our happiness. It is not in believing or putting faith in a medical man that a person obtains recovery. It is in pursuing the way he indicates, taking the diet and perhaps the physic which he prescribes, that health is obtained. The cure lies not in the faith you have in the individual, but in the observance of certain regulations, and that simply because they accord with the rules of the Eternal. The efficacy lies in the thing performed.

The setting up of Christ as the Son of God, on whom men are to believe, is an arbitrary act. That it is not an Eternal truth, may be seen in the fact that it is not, nor ever will be, accepted by the whole world. It required force to make the early Romans accept this dogma of the Church, even as it required coercion to make the worship of the golden image of the Chaldees to be accepted. And where are the Chaldees? Gone, utterly swept away. And where is the chief of that power which has been foremost in the advocacy of the scheme to which we are referring? Totally bereft of all his once enormous temporal power, he is also rapidly losing spiritual hold upon the people. As fast

and smaller. All this plainly teaches us that what is human passes away, but that which is eternal remains. Happily for the comparative comfort of Christians, the Church requires the cultivation of all the moral virtues.

Herein is real truth. Here alone is safety. Herein is the glory of Christ's teaching. He knew what the real and substantial will of our Maker is, as may be seen from his own spoken words. It is those who followed him who have partly obliterated the truth of his teaching by overloading it with their own devices.

That we should be led into atheism, as some assert, by the observance of effects, is an error. Effects, properly considered, are the results of our Maker's rules ; the consequence of certain causes made by Him and alone known to Him. We are bound to observe them, so as to be guided in the course of our lives ; but, at the same time, we should refer them to Him. We may not, and perhaps never shall, be able to understand how He produces these effects. It would be necessary to have His knowledge to understand the process by which He works ; but we should reverently bow to them as His decisions. God governs the world by rules. He has established a certain order of suc-

things, and we judge of the future by our experience of the past.

The study of effects is, then, the only way we have of following our Maker's ways, and to follow in His paths surely does not lead to atheism, but to a better knowledge of Him.

To say that prayer would become useless under such circumstances, is also erroneous. For though no sensible person would think of praying against the action of our Maker's laws, or of expecting results contrary to them, yet we may and should express our heartfelt acknowledgment for past benefits. It is also most important daily to communicate with our Maker. We place ourselves thereby in direct intercourse with Him; and, if that intercourse be sincere, it deepens our belief in Him.

True religion consists in placing our minds in harmony with the commands of our Maker. We should offer thanksgivings for all His goodness. To pray that the course of His action or law should be altered for our benefit, is a species of rebellion which springs from ignorance. When we pray we put ourselves into God's presence. We invoke His spirit. We call Him to witness our appearance before him. We desire to have more of His spirit; and humble

for this acquisition. We know what benefits we derive from contact with superior minds on earth; and, in a similar manner, we improve, strengthen, and purify ourselves by contact with the Great Spirit. Earnest prayer helps to familiarise us with Him. Often in His presence, we cease to be strangers to Him. Frequent contemplation causes us at length to love Him. And, if such be the course of our spiritual life, death will find us prepared. We shall welcome the change which places us in the presence of Him whom we have loved and revered in life.

Birds migrate at the command of their Maker. He has put a law into them which they follow mechanically, as it were. They know no better. They seem propelled by the power of Him who made them. Their knowledge is fixed. They know no more in one age than they did in the past. They build their nests in this century precisely as they did in the last. But not so with man. Knowledge with him is necessarily a progressive property. In proportion as he acquires it he can accomplish things great or small. His mind is the same in quality with the mind of the Creator; though, of course, infinitely weaker. When humanity shall have gathered for itself a larger store of mind,

such a future, let us keep the animal part of us in subjection.

Let us imitate the character of our Maker. We observe His everlasting love towards the children of men, and we should especially follow His ways in this particular. Higher objects are embraced in it. Our love should be manifested in our various stations in life, not grudgingly, but in such a manner as will conduce to the comfort and happiness of all with whom we come into contact. We should always remember that every act of our lives towards our fellow-creatures has a twofold bearing. If it is injurious to them, it is also injurious to ourselves. If it is beneficial to them it is also beneficial to ourselves. It cannot be otherwise, for every such operation is either good or evil. If good, we are cultivating in ourselves that which is good. If bad, we are cultivating that which is bad. It matters not if none see or know what we are about. The operation goes on unperceived. Just as sure is it as the growth of a tree, though unseen, is yet certain in its progress towards maturity. And we are in these transactions either adding to, or detracting from, the quality and sum of our own happiness.

This may be called the selfish aspect of the question; but there is, for all that, profound wisdom in such a

the improvement of ourselves, both morally and physically. If each person understood this cultivation as it should be understood, the condition of society would soon undergo a vast change for the better. But instead of each one prosecuting his personal improvement, so great is the ignorance, and consequently the neglect, of what is required, that we most frequently meet people busy exclusively in criticising the doings and affairs of others. Such people are quite ready to show how the time of others should be employed, but they forget to take heed of their own. They are quite prepared to talk of another's neglected field, while they freely permit their own to be overrun with briars and thorns. It results from this personal and relative ignorance of duty that there is a vast amount of ill feeling about. Indifference and even hatred abounding, which only waits an opportunity to explode. The attitude of each individual towards his fellow is not that of friendship and love, but that of the pugilist. Each is ready to exchange angry words and blows with his neighbour on the most trifling incident. This is not as it should be.

All young persons should be carefully instructed in these life-giving principles, on which their entire happiness depends, rather than be bound down by a chain

clearly, and declare where the truth lies. It is idle to respond, "It is not my business. I have not time to study these things—the present system will last my time." You but delude yourselves. Your welfare, and that of your children, demand an honest verdict.

You see the shores of truth, where light, safety, and happiness abound. Be of good courage. Effort and energy are required. Be true. Put all evil, wherever found, to shame; and go forward on the right path. The idols which you are called to overthrow, are as much the work of men, as were the clay images which your forefathers destroyed. Strengthen yourselves with all that is pure and good, and the victory is yours!

The division of land; strikes; pauperism; national debt; the adjustment of labour; are questions which all vanish when men understand what is really required of them. And all these heart-burnings will appear trivial and silly, when we comprehend our duty, and know where the essentials of it lie.

It is only under a scheme established on the broad basis which love affords, that the whole human family will become one brotherhood, linked together in a fulness of affection, all acknowledging one eternal ever-blessed Father, and striving harmoniously to fulfil His will.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MORALITY OF SOCIETIES.

The years 1870–71 have abounded in catastrophies fatal to human happiness—the Franco-German war, the declaration of Papal Infallibility, and the acts of the Commune. Each of these dramas is full of meaning, if we will but examine it.

Humanity has long required to be awakened from the stupor under which it exists; and here we have events sufficiently astounding to make it rise, and to command attention. Shall we profit by the lessons taught in these grand acts, or shall we sleep on in our folly, until others more stupendous appear?

These events, each and all, represent the natural consequence of past instruction. They are the fruit of the cultivation of the period through which we have passed. Its bitterness should act as a warning. We should consider well what we are about, whither

or shall we enter on the ways of truth? Shall we linger in the realms of sentiment and of obscurity, and await further and more startling social explosions, or shall we view the things which deeply concern us with a practical eye, and endeavour to remedy our ways?

It must be plain, to any person of common sense, that matters cannot be left to take their course as they have hitherto done. Unless a social morality is established, on a sounder basis than any yet known, society will plunge from one abyss of crime to another, until all will be in utter confusion and ruin. Take a picture of England for example. The population is rapidly increasing; in fifty years it will contain about double the number of its present inhabitants. If the difficulty of living is great now, those difficulties will be increased tenfold. Our pauper population will be greatly augmented; our criminal population will be likewise increased. The extension of the suffrage, and the vote by ballot, will place additional power in the hands of the democracy. That power may, before long, become the greatest in the kingdom. Now, unless that power is directed by a really enlightened spirit, and in a manner consistent with the true welfare and amelioration of humanity, there will be great reason to be alarmed for the future.

of Paris. There is a great possibility of our having in these isles, a larger community equally devoted to the assertion of its notions of right and propriety, but at the same time equally regardless of the rights of others.

Those ever-recurring wars for territorial or other acquisition, proclaim the folly of existing institutions as loudly as possible. For hundreds of years the Germans and the French have fought with various success. The recent great conflict between them is at length ended. A new line of frontier is marked out by the former, and which they mean to hold as their own. And they will hold it for a time; when the French will, in all probability, after some years, rise with renewed strength to regain their now lost territory. And so on and on. One man, maddened by ambition, calls upon a million to arm themselves for the fight, and they as foolishly respond. Nations have perished entirely by persisting in such folly and madness. A change for the better will only take place when the rulers of mankind learn to acknowledge, in more than a nominal manner, that the whole earth is really the Lord's; that the whole human race is but one family; that there is a better way of settling international differences, whether territorial or other, than

one another in war. We forget that we are the spiritual subjects of a great spiritual Sovereign, from the control of whose laws we cannot, if we would, escape with impunity.

The degree of degradation of the Parisians shows us the depths of the bewilderment and misery humanity may reach when it travels altogether beyond the rays of Divine light. The gross excesses committed by the Communists reveal their utter depravity. The finest palaces on earth are burned. Monuments of art are destroyed, which it had taken centuries to produce. Women and children share actively in deeds of incendiarism and death. Citizens are slain on the most flimsy pretences, while scores of unoffending church dignitaries and others are mercilessly shot. In a word, Paris, maddened by vexation and despair, under the ruin of false hopes, commits self-destruction. Her children, having abandoned all worship of the Supreme, knew no restraint or limit to their passions. Defying all human authority, they recklessly ignored the operation of the Divine laws. They acted as if there were no God. He was nowhere in their thoughts. Hence the climax of their confusion. Not to know, and to observe, the principles which produce and maintain love and peace among people, is indeed to be ignorant

The moral to be learnt from this drama enacted in the greatest theatre of the world for the edification of nations is this—That all systems which set at naught certain eternal principles, are fraught with peculiar danger, and must, soon or late, end in social ruin. Wherever, therefore, the authority of the Almighty is depreciated, there is reason to fear it will in time be lost sight of altogether. The Deity alone is the benefactor, the comfort, and hope of His creatures. We can only reach Him through ways which are really His. No mediator, virgin, nor saint is necessary for our safety, for man must be saved by the exertions of man alone—exertions which must be employed in harmony with our Maker's rule.

These are the lessons which we read in the events of the year. The grand crops of crime are gathered in. Fields elsewhere are ripening for new harvests, perhaps equally abundant and desolating. Italy is well advanced; and England is rapidly preparing. Millions spent in church-building will not prevent the catastrophe which is looming in the distance.

The clergy are busy after the burning of Paris, and while the ashes of that unhappy city are yet warm, denouncing the act of the Parisians. It is not to be expected that they could be silent when such

the phenomena by stating the cause to be utter ignorance of God. The Parisians do not acknowledge such a being at all, and hence the suicidal follies they have committed; this is all very true; but these good priests should not stop here. The fault is not entirely with the people. They forget that this large crop of crime is mainly due to themselves; they persisted in planting instruction which will not take root in free and unfettered minds; the dogmas which they disseminate are so glaringly untrue, that the people have ceased altogether to listen to them. The priesthood of Paris have lost entire hold of the people. The new doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, and the more recent one of the Papal Infallibility, to say nothing of that older one of the Crucifixion of one of the Persons of God, the Creator—these ideas are so unpalatable that the thinking humankind cannot receive them. When, therefore, they are made compulsory to salvation, the effect is to bring discredit on the whole system. The very belief in God becomes shaken where such dogmas are insisted on. If you set up a structure and declare that it is of eternal duration, and a practical man discovers some of its pillars to consist of clay, he may surely be excused if he doubts the solidity of the building. The experience of mankind

system of religion in Europe is false, they rise against it; they have done so in Italy, they will do so elsewhere: the mind is now free, it acts ill where its instruction is bad; it will act well, when it is led into the right groove. When will the clergy and great men of the earth perceive these things? Unless they adapt their instruction to the circumstances which surround them, unless they set up standards of instruction where reason will join with and support faith, where our Maker and His real ways will be exalted, society everywhere will be continually exposed to the greatest jeopardy. Communities must suffer for the crimes of their members; where masses of men are brought up without the knowledge of their Maker's ways, they are no better than animals. When provoked they become wild in their fury, and set no bounds to their destruction.

A large and enlightened body of men must by this time see the danger in which society exists; they must also have discovered that the plans which they propagate for the happiness of the people, do not bear the fruit which they expected—in short, that the plans have failed, and that the Christian Church itself actually presents a gloomy picture. Divided in opinion, it is little less than dispirited and broken-hearted; there is

a bishop, president at a recent Church Congress, declared in reference to the great religious revolution in sight "that a volcano was now smouldering at the feet of Europe." But he mistakes the reality of the situation when he adds, that "kings and states require Christianity." It might please sovereigns to see renewed the chains of superstition which for ages have bound their people through the help of the Church; but if by states is meant the people, then I, for one, declare that of Christianity, as it has been taught, both on the Continent and in the British Isles, the people have had enough. The bulk of the inhabitants of Europe have a right to say to the British, How can you represent the truth when you are divided into so many scores of sects? Religious truth ought to be as complete and perfect as mathematical truth. There can be no social unity where there are such differences of opinion.

The cultivation of these eternal principles ought to be perfect. No allegiance to Church or sect should be suffered to degrade or diminish their value, or we shall observe the strangest anomalies. The most barbarous misdeeds, growing side by side with the gentlest actions. Such was the experience of Cortes among the Ancient Mexicans—human sacrifices, and cannibal feasts,

our experience among Christian races, for, to say nothing of minor vices, war, which slays its myriads, is countenanced and supported by the great and the noble, while at the same time they are the best patrons of the arts.

Peace, love, and the other attributes of humanity, are not held in that reverence, and studied as they ought; but are cast aside and made inferior to other considerations human in their origin and nature. The Church has set up a system on too feeble and narrow a foundation, whereon the mind of man will never find a resting-place. Theologians have drugged the soul with senseless dogmas, which, like poisonous drinks, have maddened and caused it to lose sight of its way. Controversies rage and will rage until these illusions are totally uprooted; and in their place the growth of everlasting principles established. While the Church assisted to give personal liberty to the slave, it has bound the souls of all its votaries in the most complete subjection. Denouncing other systems as blind, it shrouds its followers in the grossest darkness. For eighteen centuries it has crushed and kept down the development of the soul. It has effectually accomplished the slavery of the spirit.

Let the clergy, then, while there is yet time, rise to

wherever found. Let them cast off the sullied winding-sheets of superstition, and array themselves in the imperishable garments of light. Let them fling aside, once and for ever, the manacles in the form of an oath by which they are bound, satisfied that the Truth of the Eternal requires no oath to bind its followers, any more than the Truths of Science.

A duty clearly defined and apprehended is half achieved. If we know the road to a place and wish to reach it, there will be no difficulty about it; it is when a thing is doubtful or unknown that we halt, we pause, we discuss the various channels of escape, or the remedy. We wrangle, we fight, we destroy; instead of getting into the road of safety, we find ourselves in the abyss of despair. Such is the hazy condition of society at present all over the world, that any day, and in any place, we may witness a similar drama to that recently exhibited at Paris. It is not that the Communists were particularly at fault; their doings, however immoral and odious, arose partly from ignorance, and partly from false teaching.

Pure Hindooism teaches the worship of God, and inculcates benevolence. This is good as far as it goes, but it does not embrace the whole duty of man. To preserve bodily health, several functions have to be

spiritual health, several virtues have to be cultivated. Men may be benevolent, they may be kind and charitable, and yet fail to possess the qualities which protect them from evil. Benevolence and charity are frequently used in Hindostan and other countries as a cloak for dishonesty, and other vices, which find a delusive shelter under that text, "Charity covereth a multitude of sins."

It should be the aim of our instructors to prevent disease and crime. Our education should be such that we should neither fall into the one nor into the other calamity. But, instead of prevention, suppression is the rule. Everywhere our doctors, our priests, and our magistrates are curing, or attempting to cure, each in his own way, the unhappy objects and victims of ignorance; this is but travelling in the wrong grooves. It is letting things drift towards ruin and then mending them, when they are more or less injured; it is a false way of proceeding. Mankind should not be the sport and prey of disease and crime; it must rise altogether superior to these incidents. They are appointed by the great Maker of all things as evils to be avoided, not things to be endured; and this by the exercise of the intellectual powers with which He has

assigns to us, and so long as and wherever these circumstances appear, a proof exists of the abuse or the abeyance of these powers. No person, if he has any power of observation, is unable to refer every calamity, of either nature, which he may have suffered to some cause; disease and crime are evils destined in their natures to be removed altogether from the earth; but the stream of mankind will flow on and abide for ever. It is, therefore, of the greatest consequence to show how this stream should be purified from these ills; and as there is no necessity for the commission of crime, so there is no necessity to fall into sickness or disease.

Instead of the prevention of disease and crime, of pauperism, and other evils which afflict our race, we have everywhere systems of suppression. Instead of educating the community in the ways of health and of virtue so as to keep clear of evil, we let it drift into ruinous courses, and then attempt to find remedies.

Society is misled and misguided, and hence arise all the pain and misery we observe; we must get out of the grooves in which we have so long erred, and enter upon the paths of comfort and safety. To be misled is to go wrong.

All repression of error is misdirected legislation. It is both a loss of *time* and of *means*; our Maker re-

waste of any. There is only one right way to man's happiness, and that is the cultivation of that which is physically and morally healthy. To be on the road of progression, we must daily, nay constantly, cultivate these great, inestimable qualities.

Repression founded on acts of Parliament, or other human schemes, possessing whatever nature or name, are short-sighted, and will surely fail, unless they are directly founded on these everlasting principles of good, established from eternity by the Maker of all, and intended by Him from the beginning of the world to be employed by man for his welfare, now and hereafter; for, as these principles are eternal in their force, the possessor of them obtains a nature which is eternal in duration, and of which no change of circumstances can deprive him.

What Döllinger said last year when Papal Infallibility had been defined and accepted, namely, that a new Church *has been made*, is more than applicable to the time when, some 1600 years ago, the doctrine of the Trinity was defined. That was a greater step towards idolatry than any yet invented within the Christian Church. But having from our infancy lived under the greater evil, we fail to distinguish its objection-

lible Romish priest, while we do not hesitate to accept that greater hallucination, the deification of the son of a Nazarine carpenter. Of the two dogmas the last is infinitely the most pernicious in its consequences. If the Pope were well acquainted with the laws of our Maker and followed them, his decisions on matters affecting man may be very valuable and good. Whereas setting up belief in Christ as the way of salvation is so subversive of the rules of our Maker's truth as found in His laws, that it is far more pernicious, as it diverts people from the real and direct way of safety, namely, the cultivation of moral principles.

A practical view of our duties is what we want in order to make us go right. If the farmer wishes for a field of wheat he ploughs and sows his field with wheat, and in due time he is favoured with a crop. If he prayed over the field a hundred times a day his crop would be no better nor any worse; but according to the soil and other circumstances would it be. Given the soil and the weather, the result will depend altogether upon the labour and the seed. The root of the matter lies literally in the labour bestowed on the field and in the seed. Something has to be done; an effort has to be made. It is not belief in man, nor in a mediator, nor even in God, which does the work; but

We take the seed He has provided, and employ it in an appropriate manner ; hence our success.

In like manner He has furnished us with principles of morality, which we should take hold of and implant in us; they should be applied in a direct, not circuitous, way. Nothing must intervene, or we fail to discern the source of the good, and it becomes swallowed up by false objects. A practical view of our duties would prevent us running into extravagance and folly. Unhappily, these practical views have been seriously interfered with by the substitution of unreal ideas. If in the foundation of our minds we find embedded ideas which are fallacious and untrue, we build all our hopes upon unsecure and false foundations, and the whole of our superstructure is defective and unsafe.

Every adult person, no matter how wealthy or in what social position, should follow some settled occupation or calling. Every one should contribute in some way or other to the general stock of productive industry by which the position and progress of mankind is maintained and improved. Everything that does not labour suffers. To every creature, and to every faculty, is allotted its special employment, and unless it is used it deteriorates. The mechanism of the human body is

obtain a livelihood, and thereby secure a sufficient means of existence for personal and, if need be, for family support and independence. It matters not what the kind of labour. It is sufficient that we occupy ourselves with something congenial to the particular ability which we possess or are gifted with. There is nothing dishonourable in labour, of whatever kind. On the contrary, everything that is good and honourable springs from it; whilst mischief and dishonour result from all states of idleness.

No spiritual authority is necessary; it is a useless and expensive institution, to say nothing of the immense influence for evil which any body of men banded together in a brotherhood may devise for the injury of humanity. It is also a waste of power to employ men in such a capacity as that of teachers of religion. Of course, in the case of Christianity, we can understand how necessary it is to have an army to uphold, by all means of writing and declamation, the dogmas which it inculcates; but where religion consists of simple rules, the parents of each family are quite sufficient to master its principles, and communicate them to their offspring.

The parents of a family are the best persons to deal with the children. They watch over their growth and

them by good counsel and admonition, but above all by their own example in following the way they should take. Instruction in these simple matters should proceed from the parents. They are accountable to their Maker for the manner in which their children are brought up, and they alone, and not a priest, should stand between God and their offspring. When men know that they have a sacred duty to perform in the inculcation of truth, so plain and self-evident that there can neither be evasion nor apology necessary, the hearty performance of such duty will be found as natural and as easy as it is profitable, intellectually, morally, and in every other respect which it is possible to desire.

What has to be understood in relation to morals is this: that goodness, friendship, and love, are to be produced by the use and employment, or, in other words, by the cultivation, on all occasions, of kind thoughts, words, and actions. This must be learnt and exercised. It is impossible to arrive at goodness unless the moral faculties are employed, as it is to make a grain of wheat. The ingredients of goodness consist of these things, and therefore if we want good we must make use of them in our constant intercourse.

feeling. A disposition upon the part of each state to meet, so far as it can, the wants of other states, to compensate others for losses occasioned to them by its own neglect, or violation of duty; moderation of language in discussing questions which involve the internal or foreign policy of other states; all these practices afford the surest means of averting that disgrace to civilization and to common sense, the arbitrament of the sword.

PART III.

SUMMARY.

CHAPTER VIII.

PROSPECT AND RETROSPECT.

The foregoing pages have been more suggestive than didactic. In them I have laboured rather to show the unsatisfactory nature of the teaching to which the world has been hitherto subjected, than to frame an exhaustive code of rules for its future government. Contenting myself with stating that unprejudiced reflection will show us that the Great Maker of all would not have placed His creatures in this world without forming a plan according to which they should exist there, I have pointed out that the mechanism of this plan is to be discovered only by the light which He has implanted in us—reason, operating upon the fruits of what He sets before us—experience. I have steadily maintained that what is opposed to reason, must be equally opposed to the Divine mind from which reason is an emanation, and that therefore all those dicta of religion which, venerable for nothing but

than ourselves, must be unhesitatingly rejected whenever they are found at variance with principles which have their foundation in common sense. And, when venturing myself to lay down anything like a rule, I have always relied upon the analogy of experience for its derivation, and upon its harmony with reason for its acceptance. Having thus briefly indicated that method which "The Man of the Future" should pursue in framing rules, moral and physical, for his own guidance, it only remains for me to sum up, in a few words, the substance of what has gone before, and to add some reflections which, though perhaps obvious, may not be uninteresting.

The way of the future is gradually opening before us. The teachers of the past, whatever their merits, are slowly sinking in importance. Their influence is daily decreasing. Supported, as they have been everywhere, by absolute and unlimited power, yet they crumble to dust. It could not have been otherwise in the nature of things. Theories based on new human inventions, however strongly supported, must, in the long run, fall.

The commotion which is fast rising can only be arrested successfully by the hearty acceptance of eternal truths. Humanity is dissatisfied with things as they are. The position of affairs is not consolatory. The progress

made is far from satisfactory. The way which we have been travelling upon is not the right one. We must get into another groove very different from that in which we have run. *Then will be developed the future race of man.*

I see no hope of humanity so long as it struggles in the narrow channels in which it is enclosed at present. It must emerge into the open field of real truth. Then will be consummated that higher destiny which awaits us.

Honour, influence, wealth, are not things essential to the promotion of this perfection. On the contrary, they may retard it. They are perishable and changeable, and are, perhaps, little less than positive evils; whereas, the virtues, which go to form perfection, are real. They never change. They are the only things which remain to us after this life is over, and, therefore, we should see that we really possess them to take with us to the next. As the most experienced of monied men set the highest value on that description of investment which is most certain of giving regular interest, so we should make sure, if we require happiness, to lay up for ourselves permanent treasures. Investments not liable to fluctuate, and of which we

Perfection is one of the attributes of the Great Spirit who governs us, and, unless we keep it in view, we shall never reach any special degree of excellence. Into everything we do, every action of life, we should carry the resolution or strong desire to do it well. We should strive to attain exactness, completeness, in all we propose; for unless we work up to some ideal of perfection before us, we shall never obtain desirable results.

Humanity will hereafter be amazed when they look back upon the time when they suffered themselves to be led blindfold, as regards their minds, by men like themselves. They will scarcely believe it possible that they could be deluded for so many ages by designs so flimsy and weak, which, instead of leading them into happiness, served, continually, to produce and foster misery. They will wonder at their stupendous folly in so long shutting their eyes against the manifold proofs around them in such profusion of the commands of the Creator as exhibited in His everlasting works and ways.

To establish the ideal of perfection within us is to possess the germ which, cultivated, cannot fail to improve us in an eminent degree. We should, therefore, oftentimes encourage ourselves with thoughts of that most perfect one, our Maker. We should at all

silent hours of night, watch ourselves. We should think of Him, we should remember that His knowledge continually encompasses us. He knows our ways as well as our thoughts. We should dwell on His glorious attributes, and conclude that He guides us.

A man may have a certain amount of happiness and yet may be far below the standard of a perfect man; he may have an amount of animal enjoyment in the possession of a healthy body; gifted by nature with healthy parents he inherits a healthy frame, and by the fruits of personal experience he may maintain sound health; but his enjoyment, at the best, is of the lowest order. If we give him knowledge he will enter upon a higher stage,—the intellectual, which will add greatly to the enjoyment of life. Endow him with the best faculties of the soul, and you raise him far above both the one and the other. We aspire to another life after we have done with the present, and this higher life can only be obtained, by an acquaintance with the conditions of it, while we are here on earth. It is something to be pursued and obtained, and, like everything else worth having, it must be sought after diligently. This spiritual culture, while it protects us from the ills of life, prepares us also for all its trials,

If the lower classes of animals are captivated by the beauty of form, is it too much to expect of man that he shall know how to value the higher moral qualities? Shall we not learn to be inspired by a passion for the many beautiful attributes of a well-developed moral character? Shall we not perceive in them something more than the ephemeral traits of colour or of ornamentation that suffice to arrest mere flesh and blood? These signs, we know, soon fade, but the others are durable, they belong to the everlasting. It is for us, while yet in our power, to make a choice of these everlasting graces, for really to possess such is to have happiness and life eternal.

As by natural selection animal races improve, and have actually reached the physical perfection in which we find them, so by the selection of moral qualities we improve ourselves morally and spiritually. Do we admire any one moral quality above another? then we must cultivate that quality, and seize a fast hold of it. We must make use of it in our intercourse until it amalgamates in our spirit, or, in a word, becomes our own. Our character will so far have improved by the possession of an attribute, once foreign, but now made our own, and become part of our nature.

And as the instinct natural to them compels animals

as spiritual beings, discover the importance, nay the necessity, if we desire to secure happiness to ourselves to acquire the best elements obtainable for that end and purpose. There is but one law common to both the provinces of our nature; to obtain that which is physical we must devote ourselves to the cultivation of it, while to obtain anything moral we must devote ourselves to the culture of it.

The fundamental doctrine of Comte, to seek the good of others, is unnecessary. If each had rules to guide himself, and followed those rules, it would obviously be unnecessary for any to look after others, unless they were children or imbeciles.

Comte sought the establishment of a spiritual authority, or power, to regulate the lives of men. If there were nothing spiritual in us, then his idea of the worship of humanity might have been entertained. But as our spirit is evidently an issue from the Great Spirit, it is appropriate to devise some means for our spiritual welfare. To invest men with the power which he suggests is unnecessary, they too frequently abuse the power which they have over their fellow-creatures; either they pursue wrong through ignorance, and make others do so, or they are led away by selfishness or some other evil passion.

and government, and it is therefore totally unnecessary to erect any system other than that which exists. We should find out what these laws are, and explain them, for the benefit of humanity. The system in force is actually that of our Maker. It is most necessary that we should ascertain it by study, for therein lies our improvement. Therein also shall we acquire true knowledge of Him. The tendency is to ignore Him altogether, and in place of Him to set up some human system; and this is natural enough, for it is the product of that older scheme called Christianity, wherein God is hidden in man.

Knowledge is the great thing which we must possess. He who has the best knowledge in any particular is the chief in that line; in proportion as real knowledge increases so does our means of happiness. It is ignorance of the way of health and of morals which keeps us in misery both bodily and mental. The object of our Maker in ordinary matters then, is to sharpen our intellects so as to improve our general understanding. Activity and energy to discover and keep to true knowledge is what is required for our safety; to develop these qualities in their right channels is our duty.

The knowledge, above all others, which we all primarily require is that which will preserve our bodies

Ignorance is at the root of all the evil which befalls us. No man willingly falls down a precipice, nor does any desire to lose the way to his home. The drunkard, if he knew and could foresee the misery which he was preparing for himself and his family, would not have indulged in his first acts of tippling; he was not aware of the direction of his first steps. Through ignorance we take the wrong turning in a journey, and have to suffer for it in the failure and delay in reaching our destination. Disease overtakes us through our ignorance of sanitary rules, and much valuable life is thereby lost.

Love, joy, peace, sincerity, &c., are moral excellencies of the human mind, which have been planted by the Creator, and should not be confounded with common things. They are the best sentiments of our nature, and must be cultivated if we desire goodness to prevail over evil. They are not ideal or imaginary qualities, but real, substantial virtues; and they are as necessary to pursue as cleanliness, warmth, sobriety, and the nourishment of the body. The doctrines of the Church are not so, but are of human invention, and supported by the credulity of mankind. It is not flattering to the present generation to assert that it believes in myths, but such is the fact: and the

the better the prospects of improvement for our race.

When we see our error, there is some hope of amendment. But, alas! seeing is very difficult for those who have given up the use of sight. When we are deprived of the power of reason, how shall we perceive that which is right?

Belief in Jesus Christ, belief in the Virgin Mary, belief in the Immaculate Conception, belief in Papal Infallibility, what are all these beliefs but human contrivances? Yet the believer in the first of them often looks with disdain on the believer in any of the others. And why should he do so? All these four doctrines have been formulated by the same authority—the same Church. The first of them, namely, the belief in the divinity of Christ, was promulgated very many years after his death. By the power of the Church this remarkable dogma was insisted upon and established; and if the power of that same Church had not been successfully resisted in this country, we should all now be prostrating ourselves before these other creeds. You think Papal Infallibility a myth, and the Immaculate Conception, and the belief in the Virgin Mary equally so; why stop to believe in the divinity of Christ? Because it is scriptural, and found in the

said against than for such an argument ; but letting that pass, consider who settled these Scriptures ; who but that same Church who gathered the MSS., who arranged and preserved what it liked, and destroyed what it did not approve. A great question like the divinity of a man is not to be settled by human authority, tradition, or testimony. It is not a book, a tradition, or any human evidence that can settle or vouch for the truth of such a matter. If it be an everlasting truth, it should shine as such, and make itself felt whenever and wherever presented ; but this dogma we see resisted wherever it has been stated. It has no power nor efficacy in itself; whereas the principles which promote the well-being of mankind, such as love, joy, peace, &c., are ever-living verities whose nature and consequences meet with the approval of all.

The reconstruction of society on a sounder basis than that of Christianity is an absolute necessity. We are moving on under a system full of contradictions, and we need not affect surprise at the results. Disease, prostitution, pauperism, crime, commotions, wars, strife between capital and labour, strife in the Church, all evince most threatening aspects. There will soon arise a time when there will be no security for anything of value. Neither life nor property will be safe. The

ment. Democracy is certain to possess and sway illimitable power.

What is requisite is that that power should be really enlightened; otherwise the whole fabric of society will be swept away.

Notwithstanding all that religion, science, commerce, and civilization have done, the condition of society is alarming. It is not free trade, or the spread of what is called civilization, which will remedy our evils. Not until the necessity for the extension of evil is contracted, not until its causes are chased away and subdued, can society be considered safe.

We do not censure those who fall into ill health. We refer that matter to chance and to the inscrutable ways of Providence; but those who may happen to fall into the net of justice through crime, these we upbraid and depreciate. We look upon crime as an avoidable fault, and yet it is more difficult to keep out of crime, or any moral evil, than out of disease. Physical matters are plainer to our apprehensions than moral.

We appreciate beauty of person more readily than beauty of character. Moral perfection has not the charm for us which physical beauty possesses. So much for the feebleness of our moral understanding.

We sigh for the dominion of morality and virtue,

which belong to our animal state. We exalt the latter far beyond their proportionate worth, and practically exclude the consideration of virtue. Instead of maintaining our moral qualities at a high standard, incomparably greater than that of the physical, they have frequently to give way to the latter. We pretend to love peace, but we prepare for war. We pretend to care about heaven, but would rather remain on earth.

When shall we understand that our moral nature has higher claims on us than our physical? Not until we have a better conception of the true relations between the moral and physical shall we know the right value of things.

As things go, many an innocent man loses his life, either through the ordinary outburst of individual passion, or by commotion or war. We are at the mercy of the worst of passions.

So long as the principles here advocated are not received and exercised, so long will the fortunes and life of men and of nations be exposed to danger and ruin. But if these rules mingle in our lives and form our characters, it matters not where or what we are; for all will be well with us. If we run in our Maker's ways, we shall surely reach Him in the end.

What, after all, is the substance of duty? To pass

happiness here and hereafter, preserving our bodies and our souls in safety, offending none of our fellow-creatures, but regarding all with affectionate care and attention as beings of the same nature, and inheritors of the same great privileges, as loyal and loving subjects, obeying with alacrity and intelligence all the regulations of our Maker which belongs to us to know.

Is there a religion possessing better objects than these? Does not this comprehend our whole duty?

Let us seek, then, the ways which harmonise with the mind of our heavenly Father rather than trust further to human plans.

Under this system our reason unites with our faith, while authority is supported by the fullest liberty; for obedience is based on reason. Not until the Church has ceased to teach, as it does, lessons of war in the perusal of the Bible, not until it has suppressed all prayers and blessings for victory, not until it declares all wars crimes, not until it has accepted divine principles in lieu of the statements of men, whatever their title, whether pope, priest, Messiah, prophet, or king, shall we have that improvement in the condition of mankind to which we are entitled. It is idle to attempt to go forward with such mixed rules as the Church promotes. We make one step in advance and

and therefore of confusion. What chance of progress is there in such a condition of things?

It is more than pitiful when men, who should know better, doubt and dispute the fact that there are unchangeable laws by which our Maker administers all events and things. The object of such persons is to support some more untenable theory. They are perfectly aware that the plan which they maintain is mysterious and incomprehensible, and yet they attempt to deny what is obvious in order to further views of their own. It is impossible that we can know the causes of all the phenomena around us. Indeed it is not our business to know all. But the things which belong to us to know are not difficult to discover. For, as we have to do with a rational and perfect Maker, all that concerns our happiness in this life is made most plain.

I do not doubt that the experience in the life of good, pious men of every Church has produced in their minds much satisfaction. What I question is, whether that satisfaction would not be much greater if they beheld what was real and substantial in their instruction, separated from what was imaginary and fanciful. There is such a thing as eating and drinking things useless for

which, though there may be some apparent comfort in them, yet tend to destroy that complete spiritual health which all should seek.

It is of the highest importance to bring our private experience, our individual judgment, to the examination of these things; it is of no good letting another decide for us. We live in a practical world, where, unless we weigh things for ourselves, our judgments become rusty and weak. There is a great fear of our continuing in the old ruts of corruption, of error, and of misery. Let us rather be among that band which stands foremost in that grand movement which shall emancipate the world from error, and usher it into a space of light and of truth; let us lay aside all personal prejudices; let us know nothing but principles, self-evident truths, which once apprehended lead on to happiness.

With the commencement of this year a change was made in the lectionary of the Church. A Royal Commission had decided that certain chapters of the Bible should be omitted from the usual services. They were deemed offensive to the refined taste of the period, and no doubt they are so. Let us now hope that society will arouse itself to accomplish a better and more extensive work. The excision of many superstitions

Until Christianity is restored to the condition in which its author conceived it, that system is robbed of the lustre which is its due.

Let the absolute unity of the Godhead be proclaimed, and the ways of health and virtue clearly pointed out and traced to their origin, and then before very long the path will become so plain that even children without help may walk therein.

Like the strength of the cement, which the Creator has provided for the erection of those extraordinary coral fabrics at the bottom of the sea, and which have been in course of construction for myriads of years, so is the cementing power of eternal principles wherever employed. They require no dogmas of any kind to join people together in love. They have been silently working everywhere throughout the universe. Wherever gentleness, goodness, purity, and truth have taken their abode, there has been a certain amount of genuine happiness in spite of doctrines; and wherever there is a more extended adoption of these principles, the greater will be the sum of our happiness.

It is only by casting aside all human aid, relying upon no human creature or contrivance whatever, of men actually living, or of those departed, whether called saint or saviour or by any other name: it is only

everlasting Creator that we understand His work and His will, and have a lot and inheritance in Him. We shall then alone emerge from the state of degradation, crime, and imperfection in which humanity as a whole struggles and stagnates. We shall then lift ourselves up to that platform where we shall be exalted to understand and to receive all those benefits which He will give us. It is for us to elect between being the subjects of an inferior, or of a superior, state; for whichever condition we choose, that we shall attain—an existence ending here with death, or perpetuated elsewhere in eternal life. Our Maker makes no distinction between races or persons, for all are equally the objects of His care; it is for each one of us, of whatever nation, to learn and adhere fast to His will. It is not difficult to know when we are in harmony with that will, and when we are in opposition to it. If we are wise, we will take part with the Almighty. He surely, as the All-wise, must understand which arrangement is best for us, and has accordingly made one for the guidance of us all. He does not, has not chosen any one people to make laws for all, for that would be to renounce and undermine His own work; but He requires us to closely study and follow the arrangement He has provided. As reasonable subjects we owe Him this allegiance as our best

Finally, we are here invited to enter upon a path of superior breadth, comfort, and happiness—a road which will surely lead us to the peaceful kingdom of our Heavenly Father; unlike that narrow, crooked, and uncomfortable road which we perceive has failed us, and whose travellers, though proclaiming themselves brethren, yet fall out and quarrel amongst themselves for the most trifling causes, while at the same time they declaim against those beyond their circle, and complacently consign them to everlasting perdition. Mankind, on the new road, will assuredly attain to a new ideal state of excellence; they are bound to do so when they once undertake the journey; let each then for himself inspect the path in all its details, and test by personal observation, without prejudice from previous claims of custom, however ancient and respectable.

The man of the future will have a glorious career before him. Divested of all the trammels of superstition, he will acquire the fruits of a freedom which knows no other bounds than the laws of the Everlasting. Dependent on those laws for all good, he will be held responsible to his Maker alone for any departure from them. That freedom will enable his body, mind,

present life will be his, for he will know how to avoid them. Disease, crime, strife amongst classes, covetousness, wars, will to him be altogether unknown ; for as the causes which produce these things are removed, so will their presence disappear also. In lieu of them will abound health, love, unity, joy, sincerity, charity. For the path which leads to evil will have been abandoned, and the way to the attainment of the good be opened and entered upon.

Humanity is on its trial. A great epoch has been reached : each person is called upon to determine whether he will persist in remaining in the ways which make up such a large amount of misery as is observable in the world, or whether he will decide to renounce that way.

Do you, reader, see this brighter way before you ? If you do, and decide to take it, you will inherit all the blessings which belong to that great and sublime body, who number friends and brethren in all nations, but enemies in none.

The efforts in actual progress, by the establishment of the new School Board of Education, under the Acts of 1870, do not go far enough. Something else is necessary besides the avoidance of sectarian teaching. The common sense of the country has declared against

positive and practical instruction; it requires to be shown the right channels of safety into which it may travel. The time is coming when there will be great and alarming troubles occasioned by the strife between the representatives of capital, on the one side, and of labour on the other. The latter have acquired a power in the state which may be wielded, not only to their own detriment, but to the national injury also. It is of the utmost importance, therefore, that a system of instruction should reach them which is calculated for their preservation from this danger and, at the same time, ensure safety and happiness.

We must have a new basis of morals. The old superstitions, which have hitherto held mankind in restraint, are fast melting away. Faith in the system hitherto in vogue is rapidly crumbling. If people could dispassionately, and without prejudice, examine the consequences which religion, as now administered, is working, they would admit that a system of wide-spread degeneracy is abroad. Instead of advancing morality, we witness increasing corruption. Religious ordinances, on the Continent of Europe especially, are becoming matters of ridicule and contempt. This is not as it ought to be in a matter so essential to happiness; and yet it is a natural result of that

create so hideous a picture as the sacrifice of His son as the means of safety from sin. God is thus placed in an improper light, and man becomes alienated from Him. The intention of the design, however good in a certain aspect, is overshooting its mark. Thinking people now, for the most part, do not see anything in it but a superstitious relic of a barbarous age; and so long as the Church clings to it, and such ideas flow therefrom, it will, more and more, lose its hold on the loyalty of the people. Religion, instead of serving as a salutary stream fertilising all it touches, will become a dead sea, unnavigable and deserted; and, as a consequence, men will not know their Maker. If it be true that we are feeding on poisonous moral food, the sooner we know it the better.

It is useless to flatter ourselves that we cannot be wrong in our belief. Did we not long ago believe in witches, and burn them? Did we not also make bonfires of those who differed with us in faith? Have we not heard of the persecution of the Jews by Christians? of Roman Catholics by Protestants, and of Protestants by Roman Catholics?

The mind or spirit of man being allied in however imperfect or distant a degree with the Great Spirit, the Author of all things, we should have before it the Creator

that Creator, so far as can be known through His works, should be studied, and, as far as possible, followed. Prayer should be daily offered up to Him. Thanksgiving should be frequently made to Him for all His goodness to us, and petitions for His aid in so far as consistent with His will or laws.

Our minds, by contact with the best and purest of Spirits, must benefit. We shall derive from such contact the best of gifts. As when we enter the sunshine our bodies are warmed by the rays of light of the natural sun, in like manner our spirits are purified if we appear in the presence of Him, and behold Him spiritually who is the purest of all. But, before we can derive any benefit from such intercourse, we ought first to make Him our sincere study, so as to obtain an indelible impression of His divine self. Once that we have comprehended something of His spirit, we shall be elevated in our whole character—purified in all our ways, thoughts, and actions—for we shall have imbibed some of the Divine Spirit.

To separate God in any way from the beautiful universe which He has formed, and in particular from this earth of ours, is one of the greatest errors which can befall us. The direct action of the Almighty Spirit on our minds and on our lives is what, above all things,

of the Unseen in respect to ourselves, we fail to reach our first duty—a knowledge of the way of life.

To attempt to penetrate the condition of the Most High, while we fall short of knowledge respecting ourselves, is extremely ridiculous, to say the least of it. Man has no right to talk to his fellow-men in the enigmatical manner in which some divines do, and others have done, from antiquity downwards. Their riddles serve to puzzle and bewilder. They surely do not edify. Our best object should be to discover the will of the Eternal in regard to ourselves. We find this will in laws He has made respecting us.

The way which leads to our welfare is plain, while to bewilder us with the unknown, and the incomprehensible, and the insoluble, is to keep alive a system of oppression as unwarrantable as it is injurious. There is no mystery in the way which the Almighty deals with us in, which we cannot comprehend if we will.

A divine principle may be known from a human conception by this test. The first works good only, not merely to us, but to all. It is self-evident and acceptable wherever published, and in whatever aspect it is beheld. Exhibited with becoming consideration to others, it does not excite their rage, but, when

conceptions, having their seat in our imaginations, vary in all countries, according to circumstances, and upon their minds, will not unite, but be at variance. As with a certain number and kind of materials we may build durable habitations, but if we choose meaner things shall have but temporary homes. In like manner, the Maker of all has provided certain principles, physical and moral, with which, if we build, we shall obtain a sound footing of happiness—a solid road of progress. Our imaginations have proved, times out of number, bad guides. They have created many fanciful pictures for us, which have proved as barren and unfruitful as any oriental mirage.

All religions, which have been and are, sources of crime, are not true but false religions, teachings contrary to the Divine will. They may contain something of that will, but that something is mixed up with what is corrupt, and it is from this corruption that crops of crime arise. All such religions must fall. They will give way to other forms until, at length, the truth will appear.

When we shall have obtained a proper form of truth then will our knowledge be complete. We shall know the way of life altogether. There will be no darkness in it, because the way of error will have disappeared. The Maker and Supporter of us all will

or any human scheme, He Himself will govern us. Though unseen to our mortal eyes, we shall behold Him through His laws. In place of the imaginary being, called nature, we shall have a real personal Spirit ruling our spirits and our lives, and moulding us into that perfection which is His. Once in the grooves of His laws, we shall run in harmony with His ways. This is very simple because it is natural. It is His way and not another's.

And, when generations of mankind have accepted it, and have travelled in it, great will be the blessings to mankind. God, exalted, will honour and elevate man into all purity and goodness. Our faith in Him will deepen until, at length, like some broad and profound stream, our lives shall flow, in uninterrupted safety, towards the ocean of our hopes and our joys—life in His adorable presence.

There is a divine order throughout nature, and in society, alike in the family and in the nations, whether we will or no, whether we like or dislike ; the rules appertaining to this order are continually before us, ever working their ends and running their courses; we cannot stop them if we would, but we can regulate our lives according to them, we can place ourselves in harmony with them.

therefore we rightly conclude that it is the Divine will, the purposes of the Great Maker in relation to the creatures he has made; and as he has endowed us with reason, and made us intelligent beings, it is the first of our duties to learn and understand what this His will is. This is a simple, but a most important duty.

Until parents become both the physical and the spiritual guides of their children, there is little hope of improvement. The whole matter is simple in the extreme, the knowledge necessary to acquire lies in a nutshell. A worthy example in the practical application of the rules of our Maker is sufficient to make the young follow the same wise course. All the doctors in the world cannot prevent a person from falling ill; it rests with himself only whether he do so or not. It is a purely personal matter; so, also, all the priests in the world cannot make us righteous. Righteousness must be cultivated in order to be obtained; if parents would understand the nature of their responsibilities and set about fulfilling them, the world would soon be improved in a remarkable manner.

Unless we can conquer all sorts of animalisms, whether related to eating and drinking, or to idleness and laziness, or to acquisitiveness, or fame, or rank and

will naturally produce its fruits, and when tempted he will be found to commit moral delinquencies.

It is useless to say that we cannot keep on the path of rectitude without the gift of God. As the man, whose cart was stuck in the mire, had to put his shoulder to the wheel, so must each one of us exert ourselves in this scheme of cultivation for our personal improvement. It is needless to sit with folded hands, as many do, and expect that God will perform a miracle in our behalf; nor is it of any more avail to pray to Him on such matters, than it was to the man who begged of Jupiter to help him in his calamity. The way of duty is plain, and if we wish to make the journey of life successfully, we must set about it in a manly and simple manner. Let us cease then to rely on the enunciation of dogmas though they are exquisitely addressed to us by fashionable clergy under the noblest pile of buildings, aided by the sweetest of music.

If the normal sum of individual health be represented by the figure 100, and it be reduced, whether through ignorance or folly, to 50, the blame is not chargeable to Providence, but to the individual himself or to society. The earlier the principle of responsibility is felt and acknowledged, the sooner shall we get into the right path of improvement.

firmities, but these pleas must not be suffered; if by human nature is meant the animal part of us, it is enough to say that it is a great error to permit that part to dominate over us in any way.

All knowledge consisting of the statements of individuals, it matters not who they are or when they lived, is not to be compared in worth to the knowledge derived from laws, immutable in themselves, and therefore, obviously eternal in their character; such laws are likewise universal in their application. Essentially catholic in their nature, they apply to the whole human family, they were formed for the whole human race; they contain the real design of the Maker in relation to man, and it is only through their intelligent employment that mankind can derive that benefit which is attached to them.

That alone is truth which is applicable everywhere, accepted by all men, men of every clime and nation capable of understanding. God's truth is like the sun, distinguishable whenever he makes his appearance.

Christianity contains many truths, hence its power in the world; it contains many errors, hence its weakness, and inability, and failure, to convince and convert the nations. It is not belief in Christ which makes men good, it is in the observance and applica-

precepts agree with the laws of God, they are His laws and hence their power. It is not belief in a physician which heals us, but it is in taking and applying the remedy which does.

The system which embraces the well-being of the body and promotes the affections, enlightens the mind, and perfects the spirit, that is what we require. It must be something real, substantial, and not a form. It was the formality of the Jews which first struck and influenced the mind of Christ, and against which he so strenuously battled. He preached purity of the heart, and earnestness of faith, and goodness; there was no mockery in his teaching, but something capable of producing much goodness and virtue. Rites and ceremonies he considered little, but sincerity and truth he held in high estimation.

When our mind discerns facts we are compelled to acknowledge their existence and their power. Can we then have the temerity to deny the evidence which God puts before us each day, as to His will and wishes in respect to the many events of life, and prefer on the contrary to accept, for instance, the existence of miracles, though they may be ever so much opposed to God's laws, and the principles by which He rules all things.

Laws, the Thora, but, unhappily, the laws were not founded in harmony with God's mind; they were human ideas worked out by a human priesthood. The priest was everything, continually interfering between God and His creatures. This is what caused, and causes still, the establishment of a system of hypocrisy; men can cheat and deceive their fellow men, but they cannot cheat God. It is better to be continually face to face with God, that is, to follow His laws, rather than have a man as mediator. Christ understood this thoroughly when he denounced the hypocrisy of the Jews in such round terms.

Is it to be supposed or argued that there were no laws before the appearance of Christ for the regulation of the welfare of man? Is it to be credited that God formed man and placed him on the earth without any such adequate code? What then are the "Laws of Nature," under which millions and millions of men have lived for thousands of years before Christ came, and to which celebrated men of antiquity have referred in terms of acknowledgment and praise, though they had but a faint knowledge of them. What are these but the laws of God! Now to add to these laws in the remarkable manner in which Christian Churches have done, is to represent God's work as imperfect and

Himself is held up as insufficient and incomplete. The Jews understood this full well. If we refer to the time of Christ, and examine the condition of the people among whom he lived, we find that though the knowledge of the wisest of them was very limited in extent, that they were a narrow-minded, superstitious race, very little skilled in arts or science, yet they successfully resisted the new religion. It was only the poorest and most ignorant among whom converts were found; the generality of them would not supplement their worship of the true God with the homage of Christ, for they looked upon this as idolatry. That was the opinion of the Jews, at the fountain head of Christianity, at the very commencement of it, when they had superior means of judging to what we ourselves have at this distant period; and the consequence was that the disciples of Christ had to turn to the Gentiles, the pagan nations around, whose superstitions and idolatry were such, that their minds were ready enough to receive the, in many respects, superior instruction presented to them in Christianity.

Christianity under the form of Protestantism, has done a good deal for England, but it fell far short of its mark. All the evils of Paganism were not perceived, nor rooted out; our criticism now is keener

them more narrowly; we live in an age when things real will alone answer; we begin to discern the wheat of common sense from the chaff of folly.

The clergy have yet a splendid future before them if they knew how to employ and accept it; instead of attempting to preach against the light of truth as it comes from God, let them embrace that which is manifest, and let them discourse on subjects which people can understand, and great is the good which they will effect. The people are ready to listen, with profound respect, to what falls from the pulpit, but unless it is something which can be comprehended, it serves to repel rather than to fructify.

That religion is best which produces the best effects, where virtue is in most active operation, and where most individual and collective good is the consequence. A religion whose fundamental doctrines can never be understood must end in perplexity; for where the way, or course of life, is not clear, and the path dubious and uncertain, great failure if not ruin must be the consequence. With all the desire on the part of mankind to believe in the doctrines of the Church, it is scarcely possible to believe in the truth of the dogmas placed before us. It is only by accepting them without ex-

right? Will God pardon us for putting faith in such things? The whole course of His designs in respect to us is, that we should observe our ways, that we should examine our steps; everything of health and life depends on the closest and continual personal enquiry and examination. It is our individual affair and cannot be done for us by another; the most serious responsibility rests on us, whether teachers or learners, in deciding on the course we pursue. If we, for instance, believe in unnatural, ridiculous, and foolish acts, our minds and spirits will be weak and vacillating, to believe that a good father can commit his guiltless son to an ignominious death, is to do the greatest violence to our judgment; the dogma is so contrary to the order, so opposed to the laws of God, so subversive of our sense of justice, that to believe it is to damage our power of discernment in the most ordinary, as well as in the most important affairs of life. To trust in this and other speculations, which the schools put forward from time to time, such as Justification by Grace, the Doctrine of Election, Baptismal Regeneration, &c., is to put faith in broken reeds. God does not, by any one act, make us righteous. We cannot become so at a leap; there is no royal road, it is the same path whether to the king or the peasant. No

from sin. It is only by ceasing to do evil, giving up that practice which is bad and wrong, and which is doing an injury, whether it be a secret or openly indulged vice; it is only by forsaking it, plucking it up by the roots, as we would do a nettle or other useless and injurious thing, and in lieu of it cultivating something useful and good, that we can make ourselves even approximately righteous. Let us always remember that whatever we sow that we shall reap: it cannot be otherwise. Thought begets thought, action begets action; such being the case, let us well consider what thoughts we entertain, what actions we do.

The time is rapidly approaching when the deception of traditions and old beliefs can restrain us no longer; they melt rapidly away in impotence; chaos may soon assail us. We shall be, if we are not already, threatened with some awful social crisis. The religion of the age does not answer the strain upon it. Our institutions must be rebuilt of well-tried and proved materials. I but attempt to solve the difficulty. It is for men in high places, earnest thoughtful men, to examine well the matters here brought to their attention. They are, I trust, handled with that solemnity and moderation which befits the occasion, and I trust He who governs all will direct each one to a right conclusion. The

life-giving portions, the living and everlasting truths which visibly shine in all places, from the dead leaves of human speculation, which have concealed them, the better will it be for us and for mankind.

Experience is appointed to be our monitor and guide. Our eyes are given us to see, and our judgment to judge of all things. Upon our individual judgment and decision, and not upon that of others, shall we be judged. The penalty is ours if we err, so we must be careful how we surrender our judgments to the authority of others, however high and ancient. God will exact of us an account of all we do in respect to our bodies and souls. His laws, physical and moral, are continually operating around us, and He is inviting us to their study ; and it is far wiser for us to understand and be guided by them than to put faith in statements alleged to have been made by Him two thousand years ago, some of which are directly contrary to our positive experience of His working. God is a just judge, and will judge us according to His laws. He cannot expect us to believe in alleged miracles said to have occurred ages ago, when everything He is actually doing around us in nature is contrary to such things as miracles. I deny that God is any party to such things. I perceive His hand in the operation of His laws. This I strive

He is too righteous a judge to confound His people with such views of Himself as miracles presuppose.

It should be considered that disease and suffering are a part of the goodness of God. By them He wishes to arrest our attention to the evils we too frequently submit our bodies to. All suffering is an index by which we should become aware of some broken law. He has, in His goodness, affixed to such infraction penalties in the shape of suffering; signs, like disease, at first minute, but gradually increasing if we will not attend, that we may awake to a sense of what we are liable to incur. The machinery in man will bear a certain reasonable use; but not all the strain that we ignorantly put upon it. God wishes that we should understand that use.

It has been stated that the wages of sin is death. Undoubtedly some kind of sin, or evil, hastens our end; but if such a statement is intended to mean that death is our lot *because of sin*, it is a great error. Sin or no sin we must die. The phenomenon of death is a very necessary and useful one. Without it we should never reach our heavenly home, that happier lot of ours, where we shall rejoin those we have loved. It is a change to which we should look forward, not in gloom

of health-giving work, and intellectual improvement, and enjoyment, whose end is like to a night of repose, when our spirit is set free to enter upon a higher life, a superior enjoyment of immortality and bliss.

Death is the road over which we travel to heaven, the signal which loosens us from our earthly tie, the hour which brings freedom to our souls. If we have completed all our work on earth in a satisfactory manner, there is nothing for us to regret, but rather should we rejoice at the new prospect opening before us.

There is not so much difficulty about death as some people imagine. He who really understands the true position of his body in relation to his spirit, and has maintained through life the duties of each in relation to the other and to the great Spirit of all, will perceive and approve the appropriateness of this final departure from earth. Indeed, he will rejoice in it. His body will have done its duty, the work of the perfection of the spirit will have gained a stage, its manifestation in the flesh is over, it has communicated to others a knowledge of experimental truths from the Eternal and it passes on. Bound for a period to a creature far inferior to itself in all its joys and aspirations on the one hand, while on the other it is animated

its pursuits will be of a higher and more congenial character, what more natural than that, when human ties are weakened and when the cords of earth break, it should cling with increasing tenacity to that future life?

But this can only be the case if the spirit in man have maintained its right place as superior to the body. If it place its affections on sensual and material things it will assuredly feel bitter disappointment at the approach of death, for then it parts with all that it has trusted to.

Personally, I see no objection to the change, which I heartily accept as in every way beneficial and good. Having been accustomed to follow with alacrity all His laws, I look upon this last act, however crushing it is to my animal nature, as the crowning proof of His goodness. Death then is but a translation from a lower form of life to a higher. Without it we should never have learnt what to trust to. With it we are taught to distinguish between that which is earthly and that which is everlasting. We see that all belongs to the Sovereign Maker. We take nothing with us but our moral character. In leaving us possession of this, He shows us the thing on which we should set the highest value, namely, the cultivation of that

Sorrow is not a thing which we should encourage or cultivate. It is a bad quality, a bitter fruit, of which the less we have the better. We feel sorrow at any disappointment; we feel sorrow at pain, sickness, or disease; we feel sorrow for error or crime, whether committed by ourselves or others, or by any we love or respect; we feel sorrow for any distress or calamity. But all these several phenomena ought not to have occurred. As the cause should not have been, so the consequence should not have place in us. Joy and rejoicing is the proper attitude of all the creatures of the great Maker, and if all understood and accomplished their duty there would never arise any occasion for sorrow any more than for disease or crime, which, in short, are the chief parents of grief.

Death which is generally the cause of the keenest sorrow we should learn to comprehend better. The fate of the most beloved can in no way be altered, therefore to sorrow is unbecoming. It is to murmur against the disposal of the Maker, and cannot therefore bring any blessing. Whereas to concur in His decision is sure to bring its measure of satisfaction and tranquillity. To harmonise in His way is to trust Him, and therein lies our strength.

Premature death implies error somewhere, and will

has run his course with satisfaction, who has accomplished his work, who has fulfilled his duty, is as the passage over a bridge into a new and charming province.

But shall we then not sorrow for the dead? Nay, sorrow is a profitless and even an injurious channel for the thoughts to dwell in, sometimes leading on to the worst of consequences. The dearest amongst the departed would bid us quench our grief. What we have to do is to love the memory of those who have departed, and keep our minds fixed on the cultivation of the laws which produce the best virtues, as in them alone shall we have real treasure when we join those who have gone before us.

If you link your sorrows together, you may find the chain too heavy and oppressive. Sorrows are wounds which the system cannot well sustain. It is not by preserving the memory of wounds, however painful, that we can withstand error, or find any inducement to resist weakness. It is only in the active cultivation of the good, the true, and the beautiful, that we conquer all evil. It is in the steady pursuit after virtue that we shall find the best, the surest, and the sweetest consolation in every trial, however severe or overwhelming.

sorrow that we find profit, but rather in the unconditional acceptance by us of the expression of the will of our Maker.

Why should we stand in the attitude of rebels, when we are called upon to trust Him as children? He gave us all that we ever possessed, and may He not take away that which is His? They who have crossed the stream cannot recross it. We shall one day, after our work is over, rejoin those from whom we are separated. Are we not sure of this? Then, if sure, why deplore the event? Is not their condition happier than our own?

Some ask, where is the motive or the inducement to do good instead of evil? My answer is this: If we have perceived the loveliness of virtue, and wish to become virtuous, and if we know the real way to become so, we shall try to attain it; because we shall learn to give the preference to virtue over vice, as the former leads us into a path of safety and happiness, present and eternal, while the latter brings us into a state of comparative misery.

The great majority of mankind do not understand that there exists any real way to virtue, in which a larger measure of happiness is found than is obtained in other ways. But if a plain and unmistakeable way

excellent and good in life, there is abundant reason to believe that they would choose it. To be convinced is half the battle.

And this, which is true of moral or spiritual health, is also true in respect of physical health. If people knew of a way of maintaining themselves in good health—a way by which disease would never afflict their bodies, would they require any other motive to seek it, than the desire to possess good health?

But the fact is, they do not know of any real way to maintain them in health. They have never been taught one, and they consequently drift about carelessly; they have no particular method to secure them from sickness. As they employ none, they, as a matter of course, fall ill; whereas, if they knew the simple rules of attaining to, and preserving themselves in good health, is it not likely they would keep to them?

There can be no question that as soon as the way for the health of the body, and that for the health of the soul become thoroughly known; as soon as the laws on which these ways are based become household words, they will sink deeper and deeper into the human mind, invigorating and purifying wherever they appear, until, at length, disease and crime will be known no more. Real knowledge is the first step

We possess, within us, a spiritual machinery which, though differing very much in kind from the machinery of the body, is, nevertheless, as real. And this spiritual organ requires cultivation, growth, and nourishment, just as much as does our body. Though hidden, it is not the less real. It is for us to have a clear perception of this, our spiritual nature, and, having it, we should work out its necessities, and requirements. It is only when this, our nature, is comprehended and cultivated, that humanity will be placed in harmony with the Author of humanity, who is, essentially, a Spirit. Then alone will society obtain any solidity of footing. Then alone will there be any basis of safety.

The ways of humanity, up to this moment, have been those of ignorance and discord, in relation to our spiritual head, and consequently there has been great disorder, misery, and ruin. And so long as the world chooses to run in the way which ignores the Spiritual as the first of human duties, there will be wars and pestilence, and many other evils. Kingdoms will strive against kingdoms, thrones will vanish, and races will be swept off the face of the earth. Just as surely, when we deal with things hurtful and poisonous, we are liable to ruinous results. So, if we will not enter

our national existence becomes fugitive, precarious, and temporary. There is no safety for mankind until a real, pure, spiritual kingdom is established on earth.

It matters not what form of human government we live under; whether it is called a monarchy, or an empire, or a republic, it is much the same as far as our best interests are concerned. What we have to do in any case, is to see that we are really following, in the conduct of our lives, the laws of that greater than all sovereigns, that hidden legislator, our Maker.

The compact which communities make with leading men, in governing bodies, is calculated chiefly to ensure protection for our persons and our property, and is, at best, very fugitive in its conception; but the allegiance we owe to our Maker is everlasting in its nature, embraces all our relations with man, and has everything to do with our own happiness.

England spent from eight to ten millions to crush an ignorant monarch in Abyssinia, in order to maintain our prestige in the East, while she overlooked the fact that real enduring prestige is not to be established anywhere by force. Force may prevail for a time, but eventually fails. Enduring power can only be secured when based on enduring principles. With all our untes-

of British India this great and inherent defect in ourselves, namely, the worship of three gods. We may make out as we like that the three are one, but the majority of mankind (and this majority includes people who reason) believe that three and one are not and can never be identical terms, and that it is only by an utter confusion of meaning that we can accept such a definition. They, therefore, look upon us as idolaters, and consequently, putting little faith in the stability of our government, their attitude is that of smouldering hostility. They look for a change as inevitable.

The unity of the God-head is the greatest of all truths everywhere under the sun. It is the most powerful of all facts. It is only by completely overturning a nation ; by rooting up its families ; by transplantation, division and subdivision ; by plundering, that you can destroy this grand truth in the mind of man.

Witness all that has been done to the Jews. Persecuted by all the nations of Europe, driven from every hole and corner where they dwelt, robbed betimes of all they possessed, they have held on to this everlasting fact—the Unity. And that has been their redeeming point ; by it they have been preserved and

Some seventeen hundred years ago, a Church, seated among the ruins of ancient idolatries, set up a new theory respecting the person of our Maker. It declared that He consisted of three persons, and that these three are one. Considering the great difficulty there is in making out one and three are equal, it is a pity that these bold innovators could not define their proposition in a manner so plain as to be acceptable to all generations. So important a theme should come to us in terms self-evident, and so convincing that all mankind could not fail to perceive and believe in it. But the opposite has been the fact. It has required the power of large armies to beat this belief into the nations of Europe, who, having been themselves idolaters once, have accepted it. But the nations of the world beyond, are still divided in opinion regarding that grand truth. The East stands confronting the West. The Church, which made the change, is bound to prove the fact of the proposition. Casting behind it the simplicity of the instruction of the great teacher of Nazareth, who cried aloud in the streets of Galilee, "Hear, oh Israel, the Lord thy God is one God;" and, "I am come not to destroy, but to fulfil the law." And, again, this is the first and great

impossible idea. If it wish now for a prolonged existence, it is only fair to clear up its meaning on this point. The Church must not be surprised if people disbelieve what it cannot better define, and they cannot better understand. A divine fact grows stronger and stronger, but this conception becomes weaker and weaker. So long as the Church was backed and supported by millions of bayonets, it could press any creed upon the people; but since the temporal power of States is withdrawn from the support of the spiritual, the latter is daily losing ground. It is greatly to be regretted that such should be the case. Society constantly requires a light to guide it, but that light should be the best. It should not require to be fed and sustained by force, but it should rely only on moral and spiritual qualities.

The Christian Church, in all countries, is rapidly losing its hold on the affections of the people. Dealing in darkness, it is naturally fast ceasing to be their guide. The duty of the Churches, in the great contingency before them, is to amend their creeds, to cut out from them all propositions which will not bear the examination of common sense. This done, they will obtain a moral support, and by it they will achieve a real victory over the conscience. Appealing to the

they will then acquire and become established on a substantial basis from which they cannot be removed.

The attempt to establish—as John does in his gospel; or perhaps, what is more probable, as the Church did in his name, about a century after the Christian era—that Jesus Christ is God in these remarkable words, "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God," is, like many other attempts of the Church, beside the mark. If in such a statement is found the chief ground for a plurality of gods, or if it goes to establish the doctrine of the Trinity, then indeed that doctrine stands on a very insecure foundation.

It is argued that it was not consistent with the exalted character of the Almighty that he should in any way come in contact with the grosser things of life, or with men; and hence the appointment of a mediator. While a perfect Being like our Maker need fear no deterioration from such contact with the things or creatures which He has formed, the appointment of any mediator to carry out His purposes seems totally unnecessary.

Everything which the Creator has made has a pur-

tial to it. A seed, for instance, contains the germ of a plant or a tree. It is complete in itself, formed by the Creator, it requires no mediator's interference to give it life and growth. There is no room for a mediator in the matter, nor is there in any of the relations between God and man.

Three years ago there was raised throughout the United Kingdom a great cry of injustice against the preference shown to a State Church establishment over others. This preference was the fruitful cause of all outrages, whether agrarian or otherwise. To disestablish this State Church it was said would be a step in the right direction—justice would be satisfied, quietness and security would result.

A statesman arose possessing a grasp of mind sufficiently comprehensive for the occasion. Zealous, bold, enthusiastic, splendid in eloquence and intelligence, putting all his energy to the task, he speedily levelled all inequalities in Ireland and satisfied the legitimate claims of justice.

But all the injustice of which so much was made is a small matter compared with other grievances. The human mind is suffering injury a thousand times greater, and cries more intensely for a remedy. The instruction which enjoins the worship of a man as a god affects the whole judgment. It interferes with

the true life of our souls. It prevents us from taking a right view of our Maker's laws.

Religion forms the groundwork of all judgment, and if that groundwork is unsound and unreal, it follows that the whole of the superstructure is weak and not to be depended upon. That, in a word, is the cause why we abound in folly. Whereas, if the basis of our belief were good and sound, our every act would be good. From our religious belief spring all our actions. From the nature and kind of that belief comes the welfare or evil of the people.

Now, as the outrages in Ireland spurred the government of the day to do justice there, with a view to consolidate the power of the empire in that island, will the Ministry see the necessity of considering a far more important measure of justice and welfare to the empire; namely, the religious faith of the whole country, so as to make it more in harmony with the mind of the Creator of all things?

An empire like that of England, spread over various parts of the earth, should hold and propagate a religious system at once true and unimpeachable. A creed capable of commanding the assent of all intelligent minds wherever situate. Then would there be laid the first steps of that unity, that brotherhood among men which would tend, as years went by, to widen and

deepen the ties of affection which should prevail among all the families of the empire; and not of this empire only, but of all the world. But, alas! in spite of all our superiority, there stands a partition wall between us and millions of our fellow-creatures in the East. They can have no sympathy with us while we maintain the dogma of the Trinity. To our Mahometan fellow-subjects this doctrine is rank idolatry. And, whatever may be asserted of their loyalty to the sovereign of this country, we have just had two forcible manifestations of their feelings in the assassination of two of the most eminent men in India. The murder of the Chief Justice of Bengal preceded that of the Viceroy and Governor-General of India by a very few months. Both victims were men of distinguished goodness and virtue. The latter stood pre-eminent as the symbol and embodiment of the Christian faith. The Cross surrounded by the mottoes, *Tria juncta in Uno,* and *A Cruce Salus,* were conspicuous in his coat-of-arms. Such emblazonment must have struck the attention of the Moslem wherever met, and must have challenged their criticism. This circumstance coupled with the declaration of Sheere Ali, that he was the *She-reek,* the associate of the Almighty, reveals the motive of the crime.

We should consider what such acts imply. The hand of a convict has done more in one minute to

weaken our prestige in our eastern empire than all the gambols of King Theodore who cost us ten millions.

Filled with the principle of unity of the godhead, Sheere Ali strikes at the Governor-General who embodies in his person the head of the Christian faith, to say nothing of the sovereign, and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the Chief of the British power, the commander of armies, the representative of royalty, is no more. Such men as the assassin feel that they have a mission to perform, and they fulfill it no matter at what cost. Their mind is steeped in one idea, and their body is forgotten altogether.

And there will, in the nature of things, crop up others like him. We furnish the seed and challenge the crop! While the West forges new fetters, the East takes its rough method of protesting. A greater ferment than ever has filled the mind of the Moslem since the declaration of Papal Infallibility.

The only real way to prevent such dismal occurrences is to modify our religious creeds. This course is as necessary for our own benefit as for that of others. We must base our religion on terms which will make it acceptable to ourselves and to the whole human race.

The pains, forebodings, and miseries of life, whether in England, Ireland, India or elsewhere, are all owing to our imperfect conception of our Maker's ways. It is certain

that the misery of mankind has in no way diminished by the death of Christ. It should therefore be plain to Christians that His crucifixion has not had the effect predicted of it. And consequently it has nothing to do with the removal of the evils which afflict humanity. These evils will disappear as soon as their real nature and meaning is understood, and as soon as the design of the Maker is comprehended in relation to man. Engines of repression are not what is wanted. What is required is something entirely constructive, and this is found in the establishment of a system of cultivation of all that is good and virtuous.

The safety of society rests, not on bayonets, as has been proved over and over in all countries, but in the "common sense" of the people. Increase the quantity, improve the quality of that invaluable article, by the propagation of true principles, and your position becomes assured.

Leaders of men! in whom the confidence of the nation reposes, assert with all the influence which is yours the things which are right, and true, and lovely. Shelter not behind bigotry and superstition. When danger threatens, they will be found powerless to defend. Are you wise? Read aright the lessons which have been enacted on the continent. Build on solid foundations, for on them only is a nation safe. But if you prove

indifferent to what is passing around, and are determined, heedless of warnings, to enjoy "the sweets of life," depend upon it you help onwards the day of retribution, of shame, and of anguish.

O, that a Wilberforce would arise out of your midst, and plead for life and liberty to the spirit of man!

That worse thraldom than ever entwined the negro slave. That more cruel tyrant which makes havoc of the mind, the heart, and the soul: when shall mankind be free from its deadly grasp?

Nothing can save society from destruction but real life. Man must either rise above the accumulation of evil or fall beneath it. The choice to-day is in your hands.

Whether Parliament will or will not legislate for such a matter, it is clear that we must have a religion which we can thoroughly understand, a religion whose meaning is unquestionable.

There was a time when the Church Services were dispensed in Latin. It mattered not whether the people understood that language or not. To nine-tenths of the congregations the service was so much unmeaning sound. After ages, it was deemed right, and considered beneficial to the people, that the custom should be altered, and the religious services have been since held in the vernacular. Will not the Church now perceive

that it would also be beneficial to have its instruction placed on a footing capable of being understood, or will it prefer to proceed on its course of ambiguity heedless of the consequence? The people of France, not being able to see the way before them spiritually, despair of seeing it at all. Dr. Legrand du Saulle, in his work entitled "Les Délires des Persecutions," gives us a most lamentable account of the state of the French people. He says that, in Paris alone, there are annually upwards of five hundred persons who are victims to a species of madness whose chief feature is to cause the subject to imagine himself pursued and persecuted. He flies, though no one is in pursuit, and he very frequently seeks quiet in suicide. The author very justly states that, among other reasons, the absence of religious belief is a cause of this madness. This is doubtless quite true. Unless there is a moral training, more or less sound in its character, the spiritual existence in man is next to dead. It is but a skeleton which takes alarm at the first shadow. But if our spiritual nature is fed on substantial facts, there need never be a fear of its direction and safety.

A great deal has been made of the fact that the Jews, though dispersed in several parts of the world, do not amalgamate with other races; and it is pretended, therefore, that a special curse or judgment

rests upon them. But, surely, is there not sufficient explanation of the fact in this, that they, believing in one God, and following the very evident commandment that there is no other but one God, preferred to be persecuted, and that most cruelly, rather than renounce so plain a doctrine, so fundamental a truth; and surrounded as they have been by Christian people, whom they regard as breakers of that commandment, how could they amalgamate freely with them? And if the preservation of the Jews amidst all the varied circumstances and experiences, means anything, it is this, that the Almighty looks kindly and favourably upon a race that trust in Him alone.

The wonderful preservation of the Jews and their increasing prosperity, shows us that there is something in their institutions which possesses marvellous excellence. Instead of searching for reasons for depreciating a people whom our Maker has preserved so long, in spite of the oppression of their enemies, everywhere, it would be well to examine deliberately the nature of those institutions which are so durable, and which present to the observer so many admirable features. It is more than a pity, it is a crime, to see the most far-fetched reasons sought out in order that a nation may be branded with disgrace to suit our views, "to point a moral," when the most obvious

reasons are at hand to account for the preservation of a distinguished race.

True religion consists not in the definitions, but in following the Commandments of our Maker; in cultivating, working out principles which, from their simplicity, should command universal assent.

The successful cultivation by Christ of all that was excellent and lovely, entitled him to the epithet, Son of God; and whoever puts himself in harmony with the Divine Spirit becomes, in like manner, a son of God. His spiritual nature adores and loves the Great Spirit; he partakes of the same nature and, figuratively, becomes a son.

It is only when we regard Christ in his human aspect that there is any reason to admire him. As a man, he showed that he possessed and cultivated many excellent qualities. Humble, patient, pure, sincere, unselfish, industrious, full of love and sympathy for mankind, he gave us an exemplar worthy of our adoption. As a man he was a worthy leader of mankind, and there is hope for us if we follow his example. But when we are told that he is a God, his goodness prevents us from ever hoping to be like him.

The continual controversy as to the divinity of Christ, from the very time of his disappearance down to these

days, manifests the weakness of any such claim, and is alone sufficient, to my mind, to refute such a doctrine altogether. The incarnation of God is so grand an idea, that if the phenomenon had ever occurred, it would have left abundant manifest facts behind to establish it in our minds for ever. No proposition in the whole universe could be so remarkable as this, and if it had ever been accomplished, it would have borne such palpable fruit, physical as well as spiritual, that no human argument would be required to maintain it. Whereas, notwithstanding all the power of the most powerful Church, the common sense of mankind protests against the dogma, and the day has arrived when, through the labours of able men, this and other superstitions are overthrown.

The idea of salvation through Christ has blinded our teachers to such a degree, that they are carried entirely off the true road to safety. This may be seen from the many ineffectual efforts which people make to discover a remedy for human ills. One sets up the repression of this or that evil; another papal infallibility; a third the building of new churches; while Plato and Comte formed model constitutions, whereby man's well-being would be attained. These are all unnecessary and very useless chimeras. The constitution best adapted for humanity was framed coeval with man; it is the work

of the Sovereign who is best entitled to rule over him, even the Maker of all. And the question of all questions for us is this: Are we practising His rules? Do we really understand this government of His?

The existence of our Maker, the Creator of all worlds, is a conception which should have a sure, continual, and lasting hold of our minds. Our idea of Him should be as clear and perfect as possible. We should regard Him as all-powerful, wise, good, perfect, and bountiful. But this conception, to have any hold, any substantial root in our minds and affections, should rest upon our reason. By the operation of this faculty shall we best obtain a sufficient idea of the Everlasting One, which shall produce in us actions corresponding to His will. It is by this reasoning faculty alone that we are enabled to approach the most abstruse of studies.

When, therefore, we are invited to dismiss this first of human powers, in the proposition to accept interpretations of the nature of the Divine Being, which are so grotesque as to be impossible, we either crush and destroy that invaluable faculty, by acquiescing in what we cannot understand, or we are repelled altogether from possessing within us the grandest of all thoughts, that of the Unity of the Divine Being.

It is one of the great errors of the Church to accept the triumph of evil as inevitable. By this error it has driven some of its most earnest spirits into solitude, where they delude themselves into the belief that they glorify God; whereas, if rightly instructed, they would see that God does not expect us to add to His glory—for how can any creature do this? but rather is it required of us to add something to our own personal and spiritual improvement.

As no one can add to the brightness of the sun, so it is a fallacy to talk of increasing the glory of God. He maintains His glory unimpaired throughout all ages without our aid. It would be far easier, comparatively speaking, to add to the lustre of the sun in the heavens, than for any creature to enhance in any manner the wealth of glory of the All-perfect Creator of the universe.

Evil of all kinds is avoidable. The whole matter is plain enough. If we cultivate evil we obtain evil, and if we cultivate good we obtain good. It is because we do not cultivate the good in a proper manner that evil appears.

The presence of evil is necessary in order that we should be stimulated to discern the good. Evil is expressly appointed by the Maker, who on no account will abolish it. Man, in the nature of things, must

overcome evil. As a child has to grow in strength until it reach the adult state, so man has to grow in moral and spiritual strength. He must adopt the appointed means—ever cultivating the good we secure goodness to ourselves.

Unless we exercised our faculties they would, instead of increasing in power, become weaker until we lost them altogether. Our growth in the faculty of observation is most important, as it is only by such growth that we make progress in goodness. It is only through such increase that we shall acquire knowledge to the full. The extent of knowledge, and therefore of perfection, which the human individual is to reach, is something illimitable. The vista becomes wider and wider as we ascend in the scale.

We are continually required to employ our powers of observation. Whatever act we perform, unless we bring all our faculty of observation to bear on the performance, we shall not know whether we do it as we ought. To make a false step in our walk may cost a broken bone; and so on of every, even the most trifling act of life, all may be full of peril unless appropriately attended to.

On no account then would our Maker abolish evil. The object of its institution being our improvement, we should no more be afraid of evil than we are afraid

of a precipice we meet on the road. We are continually required to exert ourselves in order to maintain the observance of our Maker's rules, and this is the only sure way to avoid evil.

Our Maker has given us a free will, and expects us to use it. It is by the exercise of a deliberate choice that we improve ourselves. By the constant employment of the faculty of our private judgment we strengthen it, as we do all our other faculties, whether employed for good or for evil; and are at length enabled to discern the true direction of life. To neglect the employment of a useful auxiliary would be a great error. Those persons are to blame who at the earliest period of our lives compel us to receive ideas which are not in harmony with our Maker's ways. Such persons, without meaning to do so, really distort our minds, thrust them away from their natural bent into artificial channels where they neither run nor thrive.

But free will, while it is a great and noble gift of the Creator, is nevertheless accompanied with great responsibilities. While He has left us the freedom to choose between good and evil, He expects us to choose that which is good. As goodness and benevolence are His delight in His dealings with us, so He expects us, as intelligent beings, to see that accompanied by good-

ness and benevolence to our fellow-creatures, and indeed towards all the creatures he has made, shall be our study and delight also, as through them alone do we reach happiness.

We judge that such is His desire when we notice the pain an act of cruelty inflicts on anyone of ourselves. We abhor such acts as unbecoming and barbarous, and as totally opposed to the well-being of society. Cruelty both corrupts the affections and mind of the oppressor, and saps the foundation of society. On the contrary, acts of kindness and benevolence, while they promote peace and good will among all whensoever exercised, produce in the minds of the dispensers themselves feelings of the liveliest satisfaction. Who does not know and feel the exceeding value of affection, love, and kindness in families? Goodness and benevolence, it may be affirmed, were among the chief aims of the Maker in the creation of man. It was perfectly unnecessary for a Being entirely independent, and perfectly happy, to create us at all, unless His desire was that we should, through the exercise of goodness, make ourselves happy. And as His acts of benevolence towards His creatures are continual from their creation downwards, we should be careful to imitate His goodness in our intercourse with mankind. That intercourse should chiefly be for their edification

and improvement in the knowledge of our Maker's ways concerning us. His truths should plainly be set forth on all occasions, then would there be a hope of the disappearance of all the disorder, wretchedness, and misery which we too frequently see and know to prevail around. This misery ever will remain in the midst of us until we understand the rules of our Maker.

Though man be ever so free an agent, his freedom never entitles him to disregard his own well-being. He is in this respect bound to obey the laws of his Maker. He cannot set at defiance, nor break through the smallest of these rules, without some degree of injury to himself, either physical or moral. And this is the abdication of free will, which is required of man, and which he himself freely makes if he is wise, namely, to conform as closely as he can to these rules.

Man cannot of himself create ways of safety any more than he can create anything else. These ways are already made, and they are everlasting. He may search and find them, and it will improve his sagacity to do so.

The soul of man is of a nature analogous to that of the Deity; and as it is impossible to define, with any degree of satisfaction, the nature of the Deity, it is

equally impossible to describe the nature of the soul. Speculations as to its materiality or immateriality are therefore as far as ever from reaching a satisfactory solution.

The moral relations of the soul, and its connection with the Deity, point to the belief that it has an existence apart from the body, though in some inscrutable way connected with it; an existence separate, and laying claim to a future life when this of the body is ended.

The exceptional nature of man as possessor of a soul gifted with reason, places him in an exceptional position in relation to all other creatures. He is evidently lord over them; all are subject to him, he being subject to a Higher one, for whom he acts on earth.

If there be any special work, which the Almighty expects at the hands of man, it is that he should be His instrument to control and arrange the happiness of his fellow-creatures, of all animal creation. To perform this duty adequately, should be the highest ambition of man, while to be rewarded for such performance, in the future life, would be a natural expectation; a hope which the Almighty Maker would scarcely permit his creatures to entertain without its ultimate gratification.

To know whether he has any substantial hope of an after life, let a man closely watch his own thoughts. Of what do they chiefly consist? What are the leading characteristics of them? If they are occupied with his Maker's laws and purposes; if he is really an active agent for Him among his fellow-men, such a person is evidently striving to be accepted of God, and he will surely in the end go to Him. But if a man's thoughts are continually running on the things of this life only, such as gold and silver, lands, and such like things, then, not having God's ways in his thoughts, is it likely that he will ever see God for whom he cares so little? The twig instinctively stretches out towards the water, that it may be refreshed and live. Can that soul be alive that does not reasonably correspond with the Eternal, the fountain of all spiritual existence?

We have entered upon an age of reason. Formerly, in the infancy of mankind, we were led by words of high sound but of little sense. We had not the faculty of reason. It was a dead enslaved-enchained power. Now it has acquired its full liberty, and by its means man may, if he will, attain an unknown degree of excellence. Reason is the most important of all our attributes. The chiefest of our possessions. It is an instrument which our Maker has given to His

human creatures alone. It is the connecting link between our Maker and ourselves. Through it He intends shall flow to us the best of our privileges, the greatest and most lasting objects of our improvement and happiness. By it our intercourse with Him is strengthened and carried on. Being invaluable to us we should surround reason with every safeguard. Neither too much eating, nor too much drinking, nor too much of any animal indulgence should we subject ourselves to; and we should be most careful with regard to the intellectual food with which our minds are supplied. We should watch whether it is really that which nourishes and brightens, or that which enervates and deadens this glorious instrument, capable of leading us to immortality.

The nourishment derived from these moral principles, is as absolutely necessary for our spirits as is the nourishment of material things for the body. And it should be observed that the interference of the Almighty is no more necessary in the one case than in the other. We should seek moral virtues for the good they do us, just in the same way as we supply the body with the food that is good for it.

What is meant by conscience is the power of knowing right from wrong; and some have asserted that this is an attribute of every human being. Indeed

they say that God has placed a conscience in us, a witness to call us to order, a light to guide and admonish us when we do wrong, and to teach us to keep the right way, the way of truth. But is not this conscience little else than the soul in man, and according as that is cultivated in the ways of truth, so is its power of discrimination between right and wrong. Where, for example, was the conscience of those protestant men who were considered excellent in their time, yet readily burned the Catholics; and where again the conscience of those Catholics, excellent in their way, who readily burned the Protestants? The souls of both were darkened by ignorance. They dealt in envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness, and consequently the fruit of their actions was bad. As soon as they possessed power they consigned their fellow-creatures to torture and to death; believing all the while that they were doing God a service. The age in which they lived was superstitious and narrow-minded, and the result of their actions was according to the knowledge of truth which they possessed. That knowledge was exceedingly faulty, and, as a consequence, they were led into the ways of error, their consciences all the while consenting to their misdeeds.

Here I lay down my pen with an affectionate entreaty that you, my patient reader, will consider

well what you are about. You are not asked to follow any opinions of mine, but you are invited to examine important facts, concerning the existence of which there can be no doubt, facts which affect your health and your morals, and on which your whole happiness is based. It is a question of life and death which you have to decide; a question to be determined by common sense alone. It matters not to you what the opinion of other men may be, however good and respectable they are, or have been in their lives. The responsibility is entirely your own, just as the misery and enjoyment of life, as the case may be, are your own and not another's. As a free agent the selection is therefore yours, and according as you choose will be the consequences.

Nor does it seem too much to assert that, were the suggestions in these pages followed and developed, we should become a people more perfect physically, mentally, and morally than any which have yet inhabited our earth. That the principles here advocated must eventually find acceptance with the masses, does not admit of doubt. Everywhere in the history of the world's progress, we find error giving way, in the end, to truth; unreason to common sense. And it is not likely that in this case alone the analogy will be violated. If the doctrines of this work are founded on

reason and experience they must prevail; and as they are reduced to practice, they must change the world for the better. The man of the future must greatly surpass the man of our day in every quality worth possessing.

THE END.

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